

Preliminary Scientific Conclusions of the Review of  
the Status of 5 Species of Rockfish: Bocaccio  
(*Sebastes paucispinis*), Canary Rockfish (*Sebastes  
pinniger*), Yelloweye Rockfish (*Sebastes  
ruberrimus*), Greenstriped Rockfish (*Sebastes  
elongatus*) and Redstripe Rockfish (*Sebastes  
proriger*) in Puget Sound, Washington

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## Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	2
SUMMARY .....	7
INTRODUCTION .....	8
THE “SPECIES” QUESTION.....	9
Approaches to Addressing Discreteness and Significance .....	10
Ecological Features and DPS Discreteness.....	21
Genetic Differentiation .....	35
DPS Scenarios.....	42
Western Boundary of the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin canary rockfish, Bocaccio, and yelloweye rockfish DPSs.....	49
THE “EXTINCTION RISK” QUESTION.....	50
APPROACHES TO THE DETERMINATION OF EXTINCTION RISK.....	50
The "Extinction Risk" Question.....	50
Absolute Numbers .....	50
Historical Abundances and Carrying Capacity.....	51
Trends in Abundance .....	51
Factors Influencing Abundance .....	51
Threats to Genetic Integrity .....	52
Climate Variability.....	52
Risk-Assessment Methods .....	53
Data Reviewed by the BRT .....	54
Additional Information on Rockfish Distribution and Abundance in Puget Sound .....	56
Summary of previous assessments.....	57
Species composition trends.....	58
Estimates of rockfish trends in Puget Sound.....	64
Methods.....	66
Long-term mean population growth estimates .....	69
Size Data for Each DPS .....	70
Threats Assessment for Petitioned Species of Rockfish.....	72
Overall Risk Determination .....	80
Conclusions regarding risk status for each of the 5 DPSs of Puget Sound rockfish .....	81
I. Bocaccio .....	81
Evaluation of Demographic Risks .....	81
Qualitative Threats Assessment.....	82
Overall Risk Summary.....	83
“Significant Portion of its Range” Question.....	84
II. Canary Rockfish.....	85
Evaluation of Demographic Risks .....	85
Qualitative Threats Assessment.....	86
Overall Risk Summary.....	87
“Significant Portion of its Range” Question.....	88

[Type text]

III. Yelloweye Rockfish.....	89
Evaluation of Demographic Risks .....	89
Qualitative Threats Assessment.....	90
Overall Risk Summary.....	91
“Significant Portion of its Range” Question.....	91
IV. Greenstriped Rockfish .....	92
Evaluation of Demographic Risks .....	92
Qualitative Threats Assessment.....	93
Overall Risk Summary.....	93
“Significant Portion of its Range” Question.....	94
V. Redstripe Rockfish.....	94
Evaluation of Demographic Risks .....	94
Qualitative Threats Assessment.....	96
Overall Risk Summary.....	96
“Significant Portion of its Range” Question.....	97
Appendix A - Rockfish Historic Data Summary and Synthesis .....	98
Supplemental fishery-independent data.....	101
Fishery dependent data .....	101
Appendix B - Geological and Climatic History of Puget Sound.....	107
Appendix C - Marine Species in Greater Puget Sound.....	109
Appendix D - Issues pertaining to the species composition data.....	115
Appendix E – Technical Comments .....	118
Public Comments.....	118
External Peer Review.....	153
Reviewer 1 .....	153
Reviewer--2.....	155
Reviewer 3 .....	158
Reviewer 4 .....	159
Appendix F – Response to reviews.....	160
Responses to peer reviews .....	160
Responses to Public Comments .....	169
Literature Cited .....	179
TABLES .....	206
FIGURES.....	238

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Ecoregions in the Pacific Maritime Ecozone of British Columbia. (Map retrieved from online source: <a href="http://www.ec.gc.ca/soer-ree/English/Framework/NarDesc/pacmar_e.cfm">http://www.ec.gc.ca/soer-ree/English/Framework/NarDesc/pacmar_e.cfm</a> ) .....	238
Figure 2 Approximate locations of oceanographic currents, Oceanic Domains (Ware and McFarlane 1989), and Coastal Provinces (Longhurst 2006), in the Northeast Pacific. 1 - Alaska Coastal Downwelling Province, 2 - Transition Zone, and 3 - California Current Province. (From Stout et al. (2001)).....	239
Figure 3 Marine zoogeographic provinces of the North Pacific Ocean. (Modified after Allen and Smith (1988) in Stout et al. (2001)). .....	240
Figure 4 Regional water masses and sub areas of greater Puget Sound: 1. Northern Puget Sound 2. Whidbey Basin 3. Main Basin 4. Hood Canal and 5. Southern Puget Sound (From Stout et al. 2001). .....	241
Figure 5 Location of major kelp beds in Puget Sound (PSWQA (1987) in Stout et al. (2001)).....	242
Figure 6 Locations of major eel grass beds in Puget Sound (PSWQA (1987) in Stout et al. (2001)).....	243
Figure 7 Schematic of circulation in Puget Sound proper during ebb tide (lower diagram) and flood tide (upper diagram). (Modified after Strickland (1983) in Stout et al. (2001)).....	244
Figure 8 Plan view of net circulation in upper layer (30m) of the eastern end of the Strait of Juan de Fuca in North Puget Sound (Ebbesmeyer et al. (1984) in Stout et al. (2001)).....	245
Figure 9 Plan view of the net circulation in upper layer (30m) of the Main Basin of Puget Sound Proper (Ebbesmeyer et al. (1984) in Stout et al. (2001)).....	246
Figure 10 Plan view of net circulation in upper layer (30m) of Admiralty Inlet and Whidbey Basin in Puget Sound Proper (Ebbesmeyer et al (1984) in Stout et al. (2001)).....	247
Figure 11 Geographic locations in the Strait of Georgia and southern B.C. considered in this manuscript (From Stout et al. 2001). .....	248
Figure 12 – Representative ebb velocity vectors in the general vicinity of the Fraser River mouth in the Strait of Georgia (Crean et al. (1988) in Stout et al. (2001)).....	249
Figure 13 Distribution of pair wise $F_{ST}$ values for 28 samples of yelloweye rockfish collected from coastal populations ('outside') or the Strait of Georgia and Queen Charlotte Strait ('inside'). Based on Yamanaka et al. (2006) and unpublished data (R. Withler, pers. Comm.). .....	250
Figure 14 Length frequency distributions of the 5 petitioned species over time. Sizes binned in 5cm classes and within decades. All data are from recreational fisheries records of WDFW. Vertical lines depict the size at which about 30% of the population was comprised of fish larger than the rest of the population in the 1970s, providing a reference point for comparison with later decades. Note that the scale for the frequencies varies among decades. ....	252
Figure 15 – Frequency distribution of Puget Sound bocaccio birth years derived from the length frequency information shown in Figure 14.....	253

[Type text]

Figure 16. Map depicting the approximate DPS boundaries for the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound and Puget Sound Proper DPSs. Figure is for purposes of illustration only and should not be used to identify precise boundaries. ....	254
Figure 17 Punch card areas for WDFW recreational data. Puget Sound Proper (Areas 8-13) and North Puget Sound (Areas 5-7) are used in this analysis (From Palsson (1988)).....	255
Figure 18 Rockfish per angler trip for bottomfish specific recreational fishery. Black line refers to data from Buckley and Bargmann. Green refers to Palsson (1988). Red refers to Palsson (2008). ....	256
Figure 19 Greenstriped rockfish (upper graph) and redstripe rockfish (lower graph) hauls by depth zone in kilograms per hectare. ....	257
Figure 20 Hauls (kg/hectare) as a function of the number of WDFW trawls for greenstriped rockfish (upper graph) and redstripe rockfish (lower graph).....	258
Figure 21 Total catch (# of individual fish) from University of Washington combined trawl data over time. ....	259
Figure 22 Species frequency data from recreational bottomfish fisheries in Puget Sound Proper and North Puget Sound. See text for details on the data sources. Approximate 95% confidence intervals were calculated for the frequencies reported in Palsson et al. (2008) using the normal approximation $\hat{p} \pm z\alpha/2 \sqrt{\hat{p}(1 - \hat{p})/n}$ and sample sizes, n provided by Palsson08. Redstripe rockfish has been removed from the datasets when calculated changes in frequencies because of concerns that discarding and highly aggregation led to large biases in the recreational and WDFS trawl data, respectively. ....	260
Figure 23 Frequency estimates (% total catch) for Bocaccio in the recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper (PSP) and north Puget Sound (NPS), and commercial catch in Puget Sound Proper (Comm). Bocaccio do not appear in commercial catch records in NPS. ....	261
Figure 24 Frequency (% total catch) for Bocaccio in recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper and north Puget Sound averaged across decades. ....	262
Figure 26 Frequency estimates (% total catch) for canary rockfish in recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper (PSP) and north Puget Sound (NPS), and in commercial catch from north Puget Sound (Comm). It does not appear in commercial catch in PSP. The outlier point (1973 in NPS) for the Buckley and Bargmann data is at 52%....	264
Figure 27 Statistical reporting areas divided into nos. 12-20 and 28-29, as used by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (From COSEWIC (2002)). ....	265
Figure 28 Frequency estimates (% total catch) for yelloweye rockfish in recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper (PSP), north Puget Sound (NPS), and commercial catch from NPS. They do not appear in commercial catch in PSP. ....	266
Figure 29 Frequency (% total catch) for yelloweye rockfish in the recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper and north Puget Sound averaged across decades. ....	267
Figure 30 Frequency estimates (% total catch) for greenstriped rockfish in the recreational catch. They are not recorded in the commercial catch. ....	268
Figure 31 Frequency (% total catch) for greenstriped rockfish in the recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper and north Puget Sound averaged across decades. ....	269
Figure 32 Frequency estimate (% of catch) for redstripe rockfish. ....	270

[Type text]

- Figure 33 Frequency (% total catch) for redstripe rockfish in the recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper and north Puget Sound averaged across decades. .... 271
- Figure 34 Data used for two Puget Sound Proper analyses. The different colors show which data were treated as separate (but not independent) population processes. Data from the trawl survey may be sampling a different segment of the total rockfish assemblage (age or size). Each process has the same long-term population growth rate (a parameter) because over the long-term one segment of a population cannot have a different trend than another segment. But over the short-term, different population segments can certainly have different trajectories. Modeling the trawl data as its own process allows that this segment of the population could have different process variance and a different trajectory than the recreational data – but the a parameter is forced to be shared. .... 272
- Figure 35 Data used for two Puget Sound (north plus south) analyses. Different colors show which data were treated as separate (but not independent) population processes. See comments on previous figure. .... 273
- Figure 37 The model estimates for 'total rockfish' trajectories measured by each data source for the analysis where different data sources are allowed to be measuring independent realizations of the population process. Mathematically, each gear  $i$  is modeled as  $\log(X_{t,i}) = a + \log(X_{t-1,i}) + e_{t,i}$ ;  $\log(Y_{t,i}) = \log(X_{t,i}) + g_{t,i}$  trajectory, where  $a$  is the shared mean population growth term (same across data sources),  $e_{t,i}$  are the independent process error terms which are drawn from a normal with mean 0 and variance  $\sigma_i$ , and  $g_{t,i}$  are the observations errors data source  $i$ . The goal of the analysis is to find the shared  $a$  that is most consistent with all the data. The analyses with and without the 1 fish bag limit data are shown. .... 275
- Figure 38 The model estimates for 'total rockfish' trajectories measured by each data source for the analysis where different data sources are forced to be measuring the same population process. Each gear  $i$  is modeled as  $\log(X_{t,i}) = a + \log(X_{t-1,i}) + e_{t,i}$ ;  $\log(Y_{t,i}) = \log(X_{t,i}) + g_{t,i}$  trajectory, where  $a$  is the shared mean population growth term (same across data sources),  $e_{t,i}$  are the independent process error terms which are drawn from a normal with mean 0 and variance  $\sigma_i$ , and  $g_{t,i}$  are the observations errors data source  $i$ . The goal of the analysis is to find the population trajectory that is most consistent with all the data. The analyses with and without the 1 fish bag limit data are shown. .... 277

## SUMMARY

This report describes the preliminary conclusions of the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Biological Review Team (BRT) on the status of five species of Rockfish: bocaccio (*Sebastes paucispinis*), canary rockfish (*Sebastes pinniger*), yelloweye rockfish (*Sebastes ruberrimus*), greenstriped rockfish (*Sebastes elongatus*) and redstripe rockfish (*Sebastes proriger*) in Puget Sound, Washington under the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The BRT has determined that populations of each of the 5 species in either Puget Sound Proper (inland marine waters south or east of Admiralty Inlet) or Puget Sound/Georgia Basin (inland marine waters east of the central Strait of Juan de Fuca and south of the northern Strait of Georgia) are a "species" under the ESA, as they meet the biological criteria to be considered a Distinct Population Segment (DPS) as defined by the joint NMFS-U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) interagency policy on vertebrate populations (USFWS-NMFS 1996). Specifically, based on information related to rockfish life-history, genetic variation among populations, and the environmental and ecological features of Puget Sound and the Georgia Basin, the BRT has identified a Puget Sound/Georgia Basin DPS for yelloweye rockfish, canary rockfish, and bocaccio, and a Puget Sound Proper DPS for redstripe rockfish and greenstriped rockfish. The BRT concluded that the Victoria Sill represents the western Boundary of the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin DPS; however, there is uncertainty in this boundary designation and there was some support within the BRT for a more westerly boundary near the Seikiu River. The Puget Sound Proper DPS boundaries for redstripe rockfish and greenstriped rockfish are the same as the previously identified DPS boundaries for copper, quillback and brown rockfish (Stout et al. 2001). All of the DPS designations were characterized by considerable uncertainty due to limited genetic and demographic information available for the species in question.

The BRT ranked threats to the each DPS. In each case, the BRT ranked lethal low levels of dissolved oxygen, chemical contaminants, harvest, and habitat loss as the most serious threat to persistence of each DPS. Variability in ocean conditions and by-catch were scored as moderate risk in each DPS.

Based on an evaluation of abundance trends, spatial structure and diversity as well as the threats listed above, the BRT determined that Puget Sound/Georgia Basin DPS of bocaccio is at high risk of extinction throughout all of its range, that the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin DPSs of yelloweye rockfish and canary rockfish are at moderate risk of extinction throughout all of their range, and that the Puget Sound Proper DPSs of redstripe and greenstriped rockfish are not at risk of extinction throughout all of their range.

## INTRODUCTION

On April 9, 2007, NMFS received a petition from Mr. Sam Wright (Olympia, Washington) to list distinct population segments (DPSs) of bocaccio (*Sebastes paucispinis*), canary rockfish (*S. pinniger*), yelloweye rockfish (*S. ruberrimus*), greenstriped rockfish (*S. elongatus*) and redstripe rockfish (*S. proriger*) in Puget Sound (Washington) as endangered or threatened species under the ESA and to designate critical habitat. NMFS declined to initiate a review of the species' status under the ESA, finding that the petition failed to present substantial scientific or commercial information to suggest that the petitioned actions may be warranted (72 FR 56986; October 5, 2007). On October 29, 2007, NMFS received a letter from Mr. Wright presenting information that was not included in the April 2007 petition, and requesting that NMFS reconsider its October 5, 2007, "not warranted" finding on the petition submitted in April 2007.

NMFS evaluated the new information to determine whether the petitioner provided "substantial information" as required by the ESA to list a species. Additionally, NMFS evaluated whether information contained in the petitions might support the identification of DPSs that might warrant listing as species under the ESA. NMFS found that this new petition did present substantial scientific or commercial information, or cited such information in other sources, indicating that the petitioned actions may be warranted, and, subsequently, NMFS initiated a status review of these five rockfish species in Puget Sound.

The Puget Sound rockfish Biological Review Team (BRT)<sup>1</sup>—consisting of scientists from the Northwest Fisheries Science Center and the Southwest Fisheries Science Center—was formed by NMFS, and the team reviewed and evaluated scientific information compiled by NMFS staff from published literature and unpublished data. Information presented at a public meeting in June 2008 in Seattle, Washington, and data submitted to the ESA Administrative Record from state agencies and other interested parties were also considered.

The BRT proceeded on directives included in a memo which was received from the Northwest Region in draft form on May 19, 2008. In that memo the BRT was asked to consider whether the petitioned species meet the criteria for being considered DPS as defined by the joint NOAA-FWS Distinct Population Segment (DPS) Policy (61 FR 4722; February 7, 1996). If DPS were identified for any of the species in Puget Sound, the BRT was requested to evaluate the level of extinction risk faced by each DPS throughout its range, assessed as either "high risk", "moderate risk" or neither, where high and moderate risk were defined with respect to specific 'reference' levels of extinction risk (see discussion in the risk section, below). Finally, the BRT was requested to document the consideration of threats to the species according to the statutory listing factors (ESA section 4(a)(1)(A)—(C), and (E)): the present or threatened

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<sup>1</sup> The BRT for Puget Sound rockfish consisted of the following: Dr. Ewann Berntson, Dr. Jason Cope, Dr. Jonathan Drake (co-chair), Dr. Rick Gustafson, Dr. Eli Holmes, Dr. Phillip Levin (co-chair), Dr. Nick Tolimieri, Dr. Robin Waples, (NMFS, Northwest Fisheries Science Center) and Dr. Susan Sogard (NMFS, Southwest Fisheries Science Center)



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destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range; overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes; disease or predation; and other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

This document is a preliminary report of the conclusions of BRT on the status of the five petitioned rockfish species from Puget Sound, Washington. A final report is being prepared and will be available at a later time.

## **THE “SPECIES” QUESTION**

As amended in 1978, the ESA allows listing of “distinct population segments” of vertebrates as well as named species and subspecies. Guidance on what constitutes a “distinct population segment” is provided by the joint NMFS-U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) interagency policy on vertebrate populations (USFWS-NMFS 1996). To be considered “distinct”, a population, or group of populations, must be “discrete” from the remainder of the taxon to which it belongs; and “significant” to the taxon to which it belongs as a whole. Discreteness and Significance are further defined by the Services in the following Policy language (USFWS-NMFS 1996):

Discreteness: A population segment of a vertebrate species may be considered discrete if it satisfies either one of the following conditions:

1. It is markedly separated from other populations of the same taxon as a consequence of physical, physiological, ecological, or behavioral factors. Quantitative measures of genetic or morphological discontinuity may provide evidence of this separation.
2. It is delimited by international governmental boundaries within which differences in control of exploitation, management of habitat, conservation status, or regulatory mechanisms exist that are significant in light of section 4(a)(1)(D) of the [Endangered Species] Act.

Significance: If a population segment is considered discrete under one or more of the above conditions, its biological and ecological significance will then be considered in light of congressional guidance (see Senate Report 151, 96th Congress, 1st Session) that the authority to list DPSs be used “sparingly” while encouraging the conservation of genetic diversity. In carrying out this examination, the Services will consider available scientific evidence of the discrete population segment's importance to the taxon to which it belongs. This consideration may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Persistence of the discrete population segment in an ecological setting unusual or unique for the taxon,
2. Evidence that loss of the discrete population segment would result in a significant gap in the range of a taxon,
3. Evidence that the discrete population segment represents the only surviving natural occurrence of a taxon that may be more abundant elsewhere as an introduced population outside its historic range, or

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4. Evidence that the discrete population segment differs markedly from other populations of the species in its genetic characteristics.

The joint policy states that international boundaries within the geographical range of the species may be used to delimit a distinct population segment in the United States. This criterion is applicable if differences in the control of exploitation of the species, the management of the species' habitat, the conservation status of the species, or regulatory mechanisms differ between countries that would influence the conservation status of the population segment in the United States. However, in past assessments of DPS in marine fish, NMFS has placed the emphasis on biological information in defining DPS and has considered political boundaries only at the implementation of ESA listings. Therefore, the BRT focused only on biological information in identifying DPS of the petitioned rockfish species.

### ***Approaches to Addressing Discreteness and Significance***

The BRT considered several kinds of information to delineate DPS structure in Puget Sound rockfish. The first kind of information considered was geographical variability in life-history characteristics and morphology. Such traits often have an underlying genetic basis, but are also often strongly influenced by environmental factors that vary from one locality to another. An understanding of the biology of the species, however, including habitat preferences, movements, distribution and demographics is also important for placing other information, such as patterns of genetic variation or potential environmental isolating mechanisms, into the correct context. The second kind of information dealt with ecological features of the oceanic and terrestrial environment. Information related to this category included patterns of marine species' distribution (zoogeography) that may indicate changes in the physical environment that are shared with the species under review. The third kind of information consisted of traits that are inherited in a predictable way and remain unchanged throughout the life of an individual. Differences among populations in the frequencies of markers at these traits may reflect isolation between the populations. The analyses of these kinds of information are discussed briefly in the following sections.

#### **Life History and Morphology**

Isolation between populations may be reflected in several variables, including differences in life history variables (e.g., spawning timing, seasonal migrations), spawning location, parasite incidence, growth rates, morphological variability (e.g., morphometric and meristic traits), and demography (e.g., fecundity, age structure, length and age at maturity, mortality), among others. Although some of these traits may have a genetic basis, they are usually also strongly influenced by environmental factors over the life time of an individual or over a few generations. Differences can arise among populations in response to environmental variability among areas and can sometimes be used to infer the degree of independence among populations or subpopulations. Begg et al. (1999) have emphasized the necessity to examine the temporal stability of life history characteristics in order to determine whether differences between populations persist across generations.

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### **General Rockfish Life History**

Rockfish are gonochores (two distinct sexes), and there is no evidence of sequential or simultaneous hermaphroditism. All rockfish have internal fertilization and bear live young (Wourms 1991, Love et al. 2002). After parturition larvae are pelagic for several months prior to settling to demersal habitat. At release, larvae are often well developed with functional organs and the capacity to swim and regulate buoyancy. This live bearing life-history is in contrast to the majority of bony fishes in which fertilization and development occur externally.

The exact nature of their embryonic development is not clear. Rockfish have been thought of as lecithotrophically viviparous (ovoviviparous) deriving all of their energy for embryonic development from the egg yolk (Love et al. 2002). However, there is evidence from the study of the developmental energetics that suggests that at least some species are matrotrophically viviparous (viviparous), and embryos derive additional energy directly from the mother. This maternal energy appears to come from dead embryos and unfertilized eggs, which is resorbed into the ovarian fluid and transferred to the viable embryos (Wourms 1991).

Rockfish are iteroparous and typically long-lived (Love et al. 2002). As such they are examples of populations that may persist through what has been termed “the storage hypothesis” (Warner & Chesson 1985, Tolimieri & Levin 2005). Recruitment is generally poor because larval survival and settlement are dependent upon the vagaries of climate, the abundance of predators, oceanic currents and chance events. Being long-lived allows adult population to persist through many years of poor reproduction until one good recruitment year occurs.

### **Bocaccio (*Sebastes paucispinis*) General Biology**

#### *Geographical Distribution and Habitat*

Bocaccio are found from Stepovac Bay on the Alaska Peninsula to Punta Blanca in central Baja California. They are most common from Oregon to California and were once common on steep walls in Puget Sound (Love et al. 2002). Genetic analyses suggest that there may be three general population regions of bocaccio along the west coast: a Queen Charlotte Island population; one from Vancouver island to Point Conception and third group south of Point Conception (Matala et al. 2004).

Larvae and pelagic juveniles tend to be found close to the surface, occasionally associated with drifting kelp mats (Love et al. 2002). They have been found as far as 480 km offshore. Juveniles settle to shallow, algae covered rocky areas or to eelgrass and sand (Love et al. 1991). Several weeks after settlement fish move to deeper waters in the range of 18-30 m where they are found on rocky reefs (Feder et al. 1974, Carr 1983, Johnson 2006, Love & Yoklavich 2008). Adults inhabit waters from 12 to 478 m but are most common at depths of 50-250 m (Feder et al. 1974, Love et al. 2002). Adults are also commonly found on oil platforms in central and southern California (Love et al. 2005, Love & York 2005, Love et al. 2006), and occur in deeper waters to the south than in the north (Love et al. 2002). While generally associated with hard substrata adults do

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wander into mud flats. They are also typically found well off the bottom (as much as 30 m) (Love et al. 2002).

### *Reproduction*

In northern and central Californian waters age at first maturity is three years for both males and females, although males (32 cm) are somewhat smaller than females (36 cm). Fifty percent of males are mature by age three (42 cm), and all are mature by seven years (55 cm). Fifty percent of females are mature by their fourth year (48 cm), and all are mature by eight years of age (60 cm) (Wyllie Echeverria 1987). Off of southern California 50% of males are mature at 35 cm and all are reproductive at 42 cm. Fifty percent of females are reproductive at 36 cm and all are mature at 44 cm. Off Oregon bocaccio mature at larger sizes with females beginning to mature at 54 cm and all mature by 61 cm (Love et al. 2002). There is some evidence that fish may have begun to mature at earlier ages as population size had declined dramatically (MacCall 2002).

Bocaccio are fecund with females producing between 20,000 and 2,298,000 eggs annually (Love et al. 2002). Copulation and fertilization occurs in the fall generally between August and November (Love et al. 2002). Females release larvae between November and May off of north and central California with a peak in February. In southern California parturition occurs between October and March but peaks in January. Off Washington and Oregon larval release begins in January and runs through April and February respectively (Lyubimova 1965, Moser 1967, Westrheim 1975, Wyllie Echeverria 1987, Love et al. 2002).

### *Growth and Development*

Larvae are 4.0-5.0 mm long at release. They transform into pelagic juveniles at 1.5-3.0 cm (Moser 1967, Matarese et al. 1989, Love et al. 2002). Most bocaccio remain pelagic for 3.5 months prior to settling to shallow areas, although some may remain pelagic as long as 5.5 months. Juveniles are typically 3.0-4.0 cm in length at settlement, although in central California larvae may settle as small as 1.9 cm. Pelagic juveniles grow quickly at 0.56-0.97 mm day (Love et al. 2002). Females grow more quickly and attain larger sizes than do males (MacCall 2003). Maximum size is 91 cm and 6.8 kg (Love et al. 2002). Maximum age is estimated at 54 years (Ralston & Ianelli 1998).

### *Migrations and Movements*

Juvenile bocaccio move to deeper water as they age. Tagging studies have recaptured juveniles between 0.9 and 148 km from their tagging location after two years (Hartmann 1987). In the same study adults were recaptured at their tagging location as much as 827 days later. Acoustic tagging work has shown more complex behavior at more local scales. Approximately half of the adult bocaccio stayed within areas around 200-400 ha the majority of the time although they made frequent small movements out of these home ranges with some fish utilizing the entire 12 km<sup>2</sup> study area as well as disappearing from the acoustic array for periods of time prior to returning. Some

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individuals remained at fairly constant depths while other changed depth by as much as 100m, generally moving more shallow during the day (Starr et al. 2002).

### *Trophic Interactions*

Bocaccio larvae are planktivores feeding on larval krill, diatoms and dinoflagellates. Pelagic juveniles are opportunistic feeders taking fish larvae, copepods, krill and other prey. Larger juveniles and adults are primarily piscivores eating other rockfishes, hake, sablefish, anchovies, lanternfishes but also squid (Love et al. 2002). King salmon, terns and harbor seals are known predators on smaller bocaccio (Love et al. 2002).

### *Fishery*

Bocaccio historically were targeted heavily both in recreational and commercial fisheries from the Canadian border down into Mexico. Catches of bocaccio are attributed to set nets, trawls, and hook-and-line gears. The largest captures are mainly south of Cape Mendocino down into the southern Californian Bight. Bocaccio populations are highly dynamic and the fishery is often reliant on one large cohort to maintain catches over several years. Since the 1980s, bocaccio populations have declined precipitously and are currently declared overfished off California (MacCall 2007), though population increase has been detected due mostly to a very strong recruitment event in 1999.

## **Canary Rockfish (*Sebastes pinniger*) General Biology**

### *Geographical Distribution and Habitat Use*

Canary rockfish are found from the western Gulf of Alaska to northern Baja California, but are most abundant from British Columbia to central California (Miller & Lea 1972, Hart 1973, Cailliet et al. 2000, Love et al. 2002). In Canadian waters (B.C.), canary rockfish are managed as two stocks: one on the west coast of Vancouver Island and a Queen Charlotte Sound stock (COSEWIC in press). Adults are most common from 80 to 200 m but have been found as deep as 439 m (Love et al. 2002). Juveniles are found in the intertidal, in surface waters, and occasionally to as deep as 838 m (Love et al. 2002). Larger fishes tend to inhabit deeper waters with the mean size of fishes increasing in the 55 – 90 m depth range and remaining stable thereafter (Methot & Stewart 2005). Adults inhabit shallower areas in the north than in the south.

The larvae and pelagic juveniles of canary rockfish are found in the upper 100 m of the water column (Love et al. 2002). Estimates of larval duration range from 1-2 months (Moser 1996a) to 3-4 months (Krigsman 2000, Love et al. 2002) after which they settle to tide pools, rocky reefs, kelp beds, low rock and cobble areas (Miller & Geibel 1973, Love et al. 1991, Cailliet et al. 2000, Love et al. 2002). Juveniles may occur in groups near the rock-sand interface in the 15-20 m depth range during the day and then move into sandy areas at night (Love et al. 2002). Juveniles remain on rocky reefs in shallower areas for as much as three years prior to moving to deeper waters (Boehlert 1980, Methot & Stewart 2005). Fish move deeper as they increase in size (Vetter & Lynn 1997), and adults are found on the rocky shelf and pinnacles (Phillips 1960,

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Rosenthal et al. 1988, Starr 1998, Cailliet et al. 2000, Johnson et al. 2003, Tissot et al. 2007). They are generally seen near but not resting on the bottom. Canary rockfish were once considered fairly common in the greater Puget Sound area (Holmberg et al. 1967).

### *Reproduction*

Off northern and central California, estimates for age at first maturity is are 3-4 years (18-28 cm) (Wyllie Echeverria 1987, Lea et al. 1999) with 50% of males mature by 7 years (40 cm) and all mature by 9 years (45 cm). Females attain first maturity at 4 years (27 cm). Fifty percent are mature by 9 years (44 cm). All females attain maturity by 13 years (54 cm) (Wyllie Echeverria 1987). Off Oregon the majority of females and males are mature at 7-9 years (35-45 cm) and 7-12 years (41 cm) respectively. In the waters off of Vancouver Island, 50% of females are mature at 41 cm and males at 48 cm (Westrheim 1975).

Females produce between 260,000 and 1,900,000 eggs per year with larger females producing more eggs. On the coast the relationship between egg production and female size does not seem to vary with geographically (Gunderson et al. 1980, Love et al. 2002).

Fertilization occurs as early as September off of central California (Lea et al. 1999) but peaks in December (Phillips 1960, Phillips 1964, Wyllie Echeverria 1987). Parturition occurs between January and April and peaks in April (Phillips 1960). Off of Oregon and Washington parturition occurs between September and March with peaks in December and January (Wyllie Echeverria 1987, Barss 1989). In British Columbia parturition occurs slightly later with the peak in February (Hart 1973, Westrheim & Harling 1975). Canary rockfish spawn once per year (Guillemot et al. 1985).

### *Growth and Development*

Eggs are 0.84-1.45 mm in diameter (Waldron 1968). Larvae measure 3.6 – 4.0 mm SL at birth (Waldron 1968, Richardson & Laroche 1979, Stahl-Johnson 1985). Estimates of larval duration range from 1-2 months (Moser 1996a) to 3-4 months (Krigsman 2000, Love et al. 2002). Juveniles settle at approximately 18.5 mm SL (Richardson & Laroche 1979, Moser 1996b).

Females grow larger and more quickly than do males (Lenarz & Echeverria 1991, STAT 1999), although growth does not appear to vary with latitude (Boehlert & Kappenman 1980). A 58 cm female is approximately 20 years of age; a male of the same age is about 53 cm. Maximum age of canary rockfish is at least 84 years although 60-75 years is more common (Cailliet et al. 2000). Maximum reported length is 76 cm (Williams et al. 1999, Love et al. 2002, Methot & Stewart 2005).

### *Migrations and Movements*

Fish tend to move to deeper water as they grow larger (Vetter & Lynn 1997). In terms of alongshore movements they are reported as being both transient (DeMott 1983, Casillas et al. 1998) and resident (Gascon & Miller 1981). Demott (1983) tagged 348 fishes off of Oregon between 1978 and 1982. Of the 23 recaptures, twelve fish moved over 100 km north or south with one fish moving as much as 236 km. Other tagging

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studies have shown that some individuals move up to 700 km over several years (Lea et al. 1999, Love et al. 2002). They also appear to make a seasonal migration from 160-210 m in the late winter to 100-170 m in the late summer (COSEWIC in press).

### *Trophic Interactions*

Canary rockfish larvae and planktivores feeding primarily on nauplii, and other invertebrate eggs and copepods (Moser & Boehlert 1991, Love et al. 2002). Juveniles are zooplanktivores feeding on crustaceans (e.g., harpacticoids) barnacle cyprids, and euphasiid eggs and larvae. They also consume juvenile polychaetes (Gaines & Roughgarden 1987, Love et al. 1991). They are diurnal feeders (Singer 1982). Predators on juvenile rockfish include other fishes, especially rockfishes, lingcod, cabezon and salmon, as well as birds and porpoise (Miller & Geibel 1973, Morejohn et al. 1978, Roberts 1979, Ainley et al. 1981, Love et al. 1991).

Adult canary rockfish are planktivores/carnivores consuming euphasiids and other crustacean, small fishes like shortbelly rockfish *Sebastes jordanii*, myctophids and stomiatiods (Cailliet et al. 2000, Love et al. 2002). Canary rockfish predators include yelloweye rockfish, lingcod, salmon, sharks, dolphin, seals (Merkel 1957, Morejohn et al. 1978, Antonelis Jr. & Fiscus 1980, Rosenthal et al. 1982) and possibly river otters (Stevens & Miller 1983).

Canary rockfish can be parasitized by the following families Bothriocephalidae, Phyllobothriidae, Tentaculariidae, Bomolochidae, Caligidae, Chondracanthidae, Lernaeopodidae, Naobranchiidae, Philichthyidae, Bucephalidae, Hemiuridae, Lepcreadiidae, Opecoelidae, Sanguinicolidae, Syncoelidae, Casalidae, Anisakidae, and Caratomyxidae (Liston et al. 1960, Love & Moser 1983).

### *Fishery*

Canary rockfish supported an important commercial fishery off California for over a century (Love et al. 2002). The commercial trawl is the main fishery, though commercial and recreational hook-and-line fisheries also contribute to removals. Major removals of canary rockfish are accounted for since the mid 1940s and populations have suffered large declines from estimated pre-fishing levels (Stewart 2007). Though canary rockfish have been declared overfished off the west coast of the United States, the population has demonstrated increases since the 1990s.

## **Yelloweye Rockfish (*Sebastes ruberrimus*) General Biology**

### *Geographical Distribution and Habitat*

Yelloweye rockfish range along the US and Canadian west coast, with individuals recorded from northern Baja California to the Aleutian Islands. The major portion of the abundance is found central California to Alaska and they are rare in Puget Sound (Love et al. 2002). Yelloweye rockfish use a broad depth range throughout their life history, with individuals recorded 15 to 549 m. Juveniles settle in the shallowest depth of this range and move deeper as they get older. Adults are most commonly found between 91 to 180 m (Love et al. 2002).

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Yelloweye rockfish juveniles settle primarily in shallow, high relief zones, crevices and sponge gardens (Love et al. 1991, Richards et al. 1985). As they grow and move to deeper waters, adults continue to associate with rocky, high relief areas (Carlson and Straty 1981, Love et al. 1991, O'Connell and Carlisle 1993, Richards 1986). Submersible dives document the high affiliation yelloweye rockfish adults have to caves and crevices while spending large amounts of time lying at the base of rocky pinnacles and boulder fields (Richards 1986, Yoklavich et al. 2000). Recent documentation of yelloweye and other rockfishes associations with deepwater corals demonstrated an association of some rockfishes to their habitats (Andrews et al. 2002, Krieger and Wing 2002). Yelloweye rockfish can be infrequently found in aggregations, but are generally solitary, demersal residents (Coombs 1979, DeMott 1983, Love et al. 2002).

### *Reproduction*

Yelloweye rockfish are internally fertilized and store sperm for several months until fertilization occurs, commonly between the months of September and April, though fertilized individuals may be found in most months of the year, depending on where they are observed (Wyllie Echeverria 1987). Fertilization periods tend to get later as one moves from south to north in their range (DeLacy et al. 1964, Hitz 1962, Lea et al. 1999, O'Connell 1987, Westrheim 1975). Larvae are extruded after a typical gestation period of a couple months, peaking from April to August for California (Eigenmann 1891) and extending to later months in Alaska (O'Connell 1987). In Puget Sound, yelloweye rockfish are believed to fertilized eggs during the winter to summer months, giving birth early spring to late summer (Washington et al. 1978). Though yelloweye rockfish are generally thought to spawn once a year (MacGregor 1970), a study in Puget Sound offered evidence of at least two spawning periods per year (Washington et al. 1978). Larvae are extruded at about 4 to 5 mm (DeLacy et al. 1964, Matarese et al. 1989) and remain pelagic for up to 2 months (Moser 1996), settling at around 25 mm (Love et al. 2002). Female yelloweye rockfish can produce from 1.2 to 2.7 million eggs over a reproductive season, with a mean eggs per gram body weight of 300 (Hart 1973, MacGregor 1970). Reports on maturity for yelloweye rockfish vary among areas and are ambiguous given the use of whole otoliths for ageing in some studies, but generally seem to reach 50% maturity at around 400 to 500 mm and ages of 15 to 20 (Rosenthal et al. 1982, Wyllie Echeverria 1987, Yamanaka and Kronlund 1997).

### *Growth and Development*

Yelloweye rockfish have the potential to grow large during their long life spans. Mean asymptotic size in Alaska is documented at 690 mm for males and females (Rosenthal et al. 1982). A study in British Columbia (Westrheim and Harling 1975) estimated this parameter at 676 and 659 for males and females, respectively (Yamanaka et al. 2006). A study in California also noted males obtaining a mean size greater females (Lea et al. 1999). Maximum size is reported as 910 mm (Love et al. 2005) and maximum age at 118 (Munk 2001). Natural mortality rates has been estimated from 0.02 to 0.046 (Wallace 2007, Yamanaka and Kronlund 1997).



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### *Migrations and Movements*

An inshore to offshore ontogenetic movement of yelloweye rockfish is documented, with juveniles moving from shallow rock reefs to deeper pinnacles and rocky habitats. Yelloweye rockfish adults do not move much and are generally considered to be site-attached (Coombs 1979, DeMott 1983, Love 1978).

### *Trophic Interactions*

Yelloweye rockfish are opportunistic feeders, targeting different food sources at during different phases of their life history. The early life stages following typical rockfish predator-prey relationships. Because adult yelloweye rockfish obtain such large sizes, they are able to handle much larger prey, including smaller yelloweye, and are preyed upon less frequently (Rosenthal et al. 1982), though predation of killer whales on yelloweye rockfish has been reported (Ford et al. 1998). Typical pray of adult yelloweye rockfish include sand lance, gadids, flatfishes, shrimp, crabs, and gastropods (Love et al. 2002, Yamanaka et al. 2006).

### *Fishery*

Yelloweye rockfish are a prized catch of recreational hook-and-line fishers. They are also an important component of groundfish trawl and hook-and-line fisheries and are a major species taken in the Pacific halibut sport fishery. Yelloweye rockfish numbers in the southern coastal portion of the range (south of the U.S.-British Columbia boarder) have decreased substantially over the past 40 years and the species is currently considered overfished (Wallace 2007). A yelloweye rockfish conservation area was established in 1998 off the Washington coast. This area was closed to the Pacific halibut sport fishery in the same year and in 2003, this closure was extended to the groundfish fishery.

## **Greenstriped Rockfish (*Sebastes elongatus*) General Biology**

### *Geographical Distribution and Habitat*

Greenstriped rockfish is a typically wide-ranging North Pacific rockfish, with individuals recorded from central Baja California to the Aleutian Islands (Shaw 1999). The major portion of the abundance is found British Columbia down to northern Baja California (Love et al. 2002). Greenstriped rockfish are also found in the southern Puget Sound region (Palsson et al. pers. comm.). Greenstriped rockfish also span a broad depth range, with individuals recorded 12 to 495 m. Juvenile are often found in shallower depths, making an ontogenetic shift to deeper waters. Adults are most commonly found between 150 to 200 m (Shaw and Gunderson 2006).

Though rockfish are often associated with hard substrate, greenstriped rockfish are unusual in that they are most commonly found on soft sediments and mud-sand-silt-cobble interfaces. Juveniles settle to the bottom of sand-cobble substrates and, as they move deeper, reside mainly on mud or rock rubble. Individuals are less frequently

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encountered among hard, high relief substrate (Love et al. 1991). Greenstriped rockfish are mostly a solitary species, lying on the sea-floor bottom, but may occur in large numbers.

### *Reproduction*

Greenstriped rockfish are internally fertilized and store sperm for several months until fertilization occurs, commonly between the months of February and May in areas north of California (O'Connell 1987). Fertilized individuals are found earlier in more southerly areas (Lea et al. 1999). Larvae are extruded after a typical gestation period of a couple months, peaking in June for areas around Oregon to Alaska (O'Connell 1987, Shaw 1999) and from March to June in California (Reilly et al. 1994). Greenstriped rockfish are generally believed to spawn once a year (Shaw and Gunderson 2006), but some evidence of multiple spawning have been reported (Love et al. 1990). Larvae are extruded at about 5 mm (Matarese et al. 1989) and remain pelagic for up to 2 months (Moser 1996), settling at around 30 mm (Johnson 1997). Individual greenstriped rockfish of both sexes start to mature at 150 mm and 5 years of age, with 50% maturity occurring at 230 mm and 7-10 years (Shaw and Gunderson 2006, Wyllie Echeverria 1987). Females annually produce 11,000 to 300,000 eggs.

### *Growth and Development*

Growth of greenstriped rockfish has been documented from California to British Columbia, with individuals reaching a mean asymptote of 375 mm in British Columbia (Westheim and Harling 1975) and 300 and 375 for males and females, respectively, from California to Washington (Shaw and Gunderson 2006). Maximum sizes obtained are 430 mm (Shaw and Gunderson 2006). Growth rates for newly settled fish were measured to 0.17mm/day and overall growth rates (von Bertalanffy k parameter) range from 0.08 to 0.12. Maximum age has been reported as 54 years (K. Munk, pers. comm.). Natural mortality rates (M) are estimated between 0.092 and 0.149.

### *Migrations and Movements*

No tagging studies exist for the greenstriped rockfish, so movement and migrations within stage classes are not understood. An inshore to offshore ontogenetic movement is documented, with juveniles moving from fine sand and pebbles out to mud, cobble, and rubble habitats. Greenstriped rockfish adults are generally considered to be site-attached.

### *Trophic Interactions*

Greenstriped rockfish are active and opportunistic feeders, targeting different food sources at during different phases of their life history. Larvae are diurnal, with nauplii, eggs, and copepods representing important food sources (Moser and Boehlert 1991, Sumida et al. 1985). Siphonophores and chaetognaths commonly prey on greenstriped larvae (Yoklavich et al. 1996). Juveniles are diurnal zooplanktivores and feed mainly on

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calanoid copepods and barnacle cyprids (Allen 1982, Gaines and Roughgarden 1987, Love et al. 1991). Juvenile greenstriped rockfish are preyed upon by birds, nearshore fishes, salmon, and porpoise (Ainley et al. 1993, Love et al. 1991, Morejohn et al. 1978). Adults may also include nocturnal feeding behavior, consuming bigger crustaceans, fish, and cephalopods (Allen 1982). Greenstriped rockfish adults have been recovered in the stomachs of sharks, porpoise, salmon, seals, and possibly river otters (Antonelis Jr. and Fiscus 1980, Merkel 1957, Morejohn et al. 1978).

### *Fishery*

Greenstriped rockfish comprise a common component of the west coast groundfish trawl fishery, though they are often discarded due to their small size (Love et al. 2002). They are more commonly retained in British Columbia where they obtain bigger sizes (Love et al. 2002). They are also frequently taken, but not targeted, in recreational fisheries, and often discarded.

## **Redstripe Rockfish (*Sebastes proriger*) General Biology**

### *Geographical Distribution and Habitat*

Redstripe rockfish are wide ranging, with reports of individuals from southern Baja California to the Aleutian Islands (Love et al. 2002), including the Puget Sound. Redstripe rockfish abundance is highest from southeast Alaska to central Oregon (Love et al. 2002). The depth range of redstripe rockfish is likewise wide, with individuals recorded from 12 to 425 m. Juvenile settle in shallower depths and move to deeper habitat as adults. Adult redstripe rockfish are most commonly found between 150 to 275 m.

Redstripe rockfish are most commonly found on a variety of substrates, from hard, high-relief reefs to and sand-cobble interfaces. Juveniles settle to the bottom of sand-cobble substrates (Moser and Boehlert 1991) and move as adults onto deeper rocky reefs and low-relief rubble bottoms. Redstripe rockfish can be found alone or in aggregations, usually near the sea-floor bottom (Love et al. 2002).

### *Reproduction*

Redstripe rockfish are internally fertilized and store sperm for several months until fertilization. Fertilization occurs between the months of April and May in areas north of California (O'Connell 1987, Shaw 1999, Wyllie Echeverria 1987). Larvae are extruded after a typical gestation period of a couple months, peaking in July for British Columbia (Westrheim 1975) and from June in Oregon (Shaw 1999, Wyllie Echeverria 1987). Redstripe rockfish spawn once (Shaw 1999). Larvae are extruded at about 5.4 mm (Matarese et al. 1989) and remain pelagic for up to 2 months (Moser 1996). Settling size is unrecorded. Recorded size at first maturity for redstripe rockfish is 210 to 220 mm (Shaw 1999). Size at 50% maturity was recorded in the 1970s to be 280 and 290 mm (Westrheim 1975) for males and females, respectively, differing for samples collected in

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the 1990s (243 and 262 mm for males and females (about 7 years old), respectively (Shaw 1999)). Whether this represents changes in size at maturity over time, or differential representation of individuals that geographically mature larger, is not known. No information is available on individual fecundity.

### *Growth and Development*

Growth of redstripe rockfish has been documented from California to British Columbia, with males and females showing sex-specific growth curves. Females are bigger and grow slower, reaching a mean asymptote of 410 to 420 mm in British Columbia, while males reach mean asymptotic mean size at 330 and 340 mm (Westrheim and Harling 1975). Individual redstripe rockfish taken from California to Washington were estimated to reach a mean asymptotic size of 295 to 383 for males and females respectively (Shaw 1999). Maximum sizes obtained are 510 mm (Shaw 1999). Maximum age has been reported at 40 years (T. Laidig, pers. comm.). Natural mortality rates are estimated between 0.01 (for males) and 0.17 (for females).

### *Migrations and Movements*

No tagging studies exist for the redstripe rockfish, so movement and migrations within stage classes are not understood. An inshore to offshore ontogenetic movement is documented, with juveniles moving from fine sand and pebbles out to deeper cobble and rocky habitats. Redstripe rockfish adults are generally considered to be site-attached.

### *Trophic Interactions*

Redstripe rockfish are active and opportunistic feeders, and show feeding habits similar to the greenstriped rockfish. Larvae are diurnal, with nauplii, eggs, and copepods representing important food sources (Moser and Boehlert 1991, Sumida et al. 1985). Siphonophores and chaetognaths commonly prey on redstripe rockfish larvae (Yoklavich et al. 1996). Juveniles are diurnal zooplanktivores and feed mainly on calanoid copepods and barnacle cyprids (Allen 1982, Gaines and Roughgarden 1987, Love et al. 1991). Juvenile greenstriped are preyed upon by birds, nearshore fishes, salmon, and porpoise (Ainley et al. 1993, Love et al. 1991, Morejohn et al. 1978). Adults may also include nocturnal feeding behavior, consuming bigger crustaceans, fish, and cephalopods (Allen 1982). Greenstriped rockfish adults have been recovered in the stomachs of sharks, porpoise, salmon, seals, and possibly river otters (Antonelis Jr. and Fiscus 1980, Merkel 1957, Morejohn et al. 1978).

### *Fishery*

Redstripe rockfish are commonly taken in the west coast groundfish trawl fishery from Oregon to British Columbia and were targeted as food as early as the 1880s off Alaska (Love et al. 2002).

## ***Ecological Features and DPS Discreteness***

Many marine species are characterized by extended pelagic periods of early life history stages believed sufficient to connect populations at long distances (Palumbi 1994, Waples 1998). In the case of rockfishes, the larval and pelagic juvenile phases can last several months (Matarese et al. 1989). Given the large geographic ranges of most rockfishes and lack of migration and movement in the adult phase, these pelagic phases were often considered the bridge connecting populations along the coast. Despite this potential for connectivity, recent work describing *Sebastes* as a rapidly evolving ‘species flock’ (Burford and Bernardi 2008, Johns and Avise 1998) and evidence of intrapopulation structure (Cope 2002, Miller and Shanks 2004) reveal many mechanisms by which rockfish populations are structured and, in some cases, function in relative isolation.

Oceanographic mechanisms (combining the effects of hydrographic forces and geographic features) received the greatest amount of attention from the BRT when explaining potential sources of population structure. Onshore current, eddies, upwelling shadows, and various localized circulation events create conditions that retain larvae rather than distribute them (Graham et al. 1992, Owen 1980, Wing et al. 1998). Larger barriers to dispersal have also been identified in many rockfishes (Cope 2004, Matala et al. 2004, Williams and Ralston 2002), potentially dividing the coast up into broader segments of population interactions. Additional, behavioral modifications by juvenile rockfishes also promote local retention (Larson et al. 1994). Adult behavior often maintains the structure produced from the early life history via high site fidelity and low movement rates. Assortative mating and territoriality can also increase the amount of structure among populations (Hyde et al. 2008, Narum et al. 2004).

Puget Sound is a unique area that promotes a greater amount of local retention for rockfish larvae than is found along the coast. For example, studies looking at connectivity between populations of copper rockfish found strong separation between coastal and inland populations (Buonaccorsi et al. 2002). This separation may be maintained through a very low exchange of water (Ebbsmeyer et al. 1984), thus promoting the isolation of Puget Sound populations from coastal conspecifics.

The analysis of ecological features or habitat characteristics may indicate that a population segment occupies an unusual or distinctive habitat, relative to the biological species as a whole. One of the criteria that may be useful for evaluating discreteness as articulated in the joint DPS policy (USFWS-NMFS 1996) relates to the population being “markedly separated from other populations of the same taxon as a consequence of ... ecological ... factors.” In addition, the persistence of a discrete population segment in an ecological setting unusual or unique for the taxon is also a factor identified in the joint DPS policy that may provide evidence of the population's significance. Oceanographic and other ecological features may also contribute to isolation between marine populations.

### **Marine Zoogeography**

Marine zoogeography attempts to identify regional geographic patterns in marine species' distribution and delineate faunal provinces or regions based largely on the occurrence of endemic species and of unique species' assemblages (Ekman 1953,

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Hedgpeth 1957, Briggs 1974, Allen and Smith 1988). These province boundaries are usually coincident with changes in the physical environment such as temperature and major oceanographic currents. Similarly to the above ecological features category, boundaries between zoogeographic provinces may indicate changes in the physical environment that are shared with the species under review.

### **Marine Zoogeographic Provinces Relevant to Puget Sound rockfish DPS Determinations**

Ekman (1953), Hedgpeth (1957), and Briggs (1974) summarized the distribution patterns of coastal marine fishes and invertebrates and defined major worldwide marine zoogeographic zones or provinces. Along the coastline of the boreal eastern Pacific, which extends roughly from Point Conception, California to the eastern Bering Sea, numerous schemes have been proposed for grouping the faunas into zones or provinces. A number of authors (Ekman 1953, Hedgpeth 1957, Briggs 1974, Allen and Smith 1988) have recognized a zoogeographic zone within the lower boreal eastern Pacific that has been termed the Oregonian Province. Another zone in the upper boreal eastern Pacific has been termed the Aleutian Province (Briggs 1974). However, exact boundaries of zoogeographic provinces in the eastern boreal Pacific are in dispute (Allen and Smith 1988). Briggs (1974) and Allen and Smith (1988) reviewed previous literature from a variety of taxa and from fishes, respectively, and found the coastal region from Puget Sound to Sitka, Alaska to be a "gray zone" or transition zone that could be classified as part of either of two provinces: Aleutian or Oregonian (see Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3). The southern boundary of the Oregonian Province is generally recognized as Point Conception, California and the northern boundary of the Aleutian Province is similarly recognized as Nunivak in the Bering Sea or perhaps the Aleutian Islands (Allen and Smith 1988).

Briggs (1974) placed the boundary between the Oregonian and Aleutian Provinces at Dixon Entrance, based on the well-studied distribution of mollusks, but indicated that distributions of fishes, echinoderms, and marine algae gave evidence for placement of this boundary in the vicinity of Sitka, Alaska. Briggs (1974) placed strong emphasis on the distribution of littoral mollusks (due to the more thorough treatment this group has received) in placing a major faunal break at Dixon Entrance. The authoritative work by Valentine (1966) on distribution of marine mollusks of the northeastern Pacific shelf showed that the Oregonian molluscan assemblage extended to Dixon Entrance with the Aleutian fauna extending northward from that area. Valentine (1966) erected the term Columbian Sub-province to define the zone from Puget Sound to Dixon Entrance.

Several lines of evidence suggest that an important zoogeographic break for marine fishes occurs in the vicinity of Southeast Alaska. Peden and Wilson (1976) investigated the distributions of inshore fishes in British Columbia, and found Dixon Entrance to be of minor importance as a barrier to fish distribution. A more likely boundary between these fish faunas was variously suggested to occur near Sitka, Alaska, off northern Vancouver Island, or off Cape Flattery, Washington (Peden and Wilson 1976, Allen and Smith 1988). Chen (1971) found that of the more than 50 or more rockfish species belonging to the genus *Sebastes* occurring in northern California, more than two-thirds do not extend north of British Columbia or Southeast Alaska. Briggs (1974, p. 278) stated that "about 50 percent of the entire shore fish fauna of western

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Canada does not extend north of the Alaskan Panhandle." In addition, many marine fish species common to the Bering Sea, extend southward into the Gulf of Alaska but apparently occur no further south (Briggs 1974). Allen and Smith (1988, p. 144) noted that "the relative abundance of some geographically-displacing [marine fish] species suggest that the boundary between these provinces [Aleutian and Oregonian] occurs off northern Vancouver Island."

Blaylock (et al. 1998) examined the distribution of over 25 species of parasites in 432 juvenile and adult Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) sampled over much of its North American range and found evidence of three zoogeographic zones as determined by parasite clustering; northern, central, and southern. Similar to studies with other invertebrates, Blaylock et al. (1998, p. 2269) found a breakpoint between zoogeographic zones "in the vicinity of the Queen Charlotte Islands."

### **Environmental History and Features of Greater Puget Sound Relevant to DPS Determinations for Puget Sound rockfish**

This section describes the physical, oceanographic, and climatic features in greater Puget Sound that may contribute to isolation among populations of the five rockfish species considered in this status review. This section, along with Appendices C (Geological and climate history of Puget Sound) and D (Marine species in Greater Puget Sound) provides a basis for identifying climatic and biological factors that may contribute to extinction risk for these species. The following summary focuses primarily on the marine waters of greater Puget Sound that lie south of the boundary between Canada and the United States. However, because the five rockfish species are also found throughout the extensive inland waterway that also encompasses the Strait of Georgia in Canada, a brief description of this larger system is also presented.

Greater Puget Sound is a fjord-like estuary located in northwest Washington State and covers an area of about 2,330 km<sup>2</sup>, including 4,000 km of shoreline. Puget Sound is part of a larger inland system situated between southern Vancouver Island and the mainland coasts of Washington State and British Columbia that encompasses the Strait of Georgia and Strait of Juan de Fuca (Burns 1985). This extensive system (the Georgia-Fuca system) is series of interconnected basins separated by shallow sills. These sills define the geometry of the basins and play a pivotal role in basin dynamics through lateral water exchange (Thomson 1994). It is directly linked to the Pacific Ocean through the Strait of Juan de Fuca, whereas to the north, a narrow more circuitous connection exits through the constricted channels of Johnstone and Queen Charlotte Straits. The estuarine component of circulation is a dominant feature throughout the system, with net seaward outflow in the upper portion of the water column driven by winter rainfall and summer snowmelt, and net landward inflow of high salinity ocean water in the lower portion of the water column (Thomson 1994, Masson 2002). Other fundamental forcing mechanisms that affect flow include tidal forcing, wind forcing generated by atmospheric gradients (Matsuura and Cannon 1997), and coastal ocean forcing propagated by oceanic events originating over the continental margin (Cannon 1990).

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In this document, we define greater Puget Sound as the lands from the crests of the Cascade and Olympic mountains to the shores of marine waters extending from the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca east, including the San Juan Islands, and south to Olympia. As with the more extensive Georgia-Fuca system, Puget Sound's geometry and circulation is shaped and defined by shallow sills, including those at Admiralty Inlet (65 m depth), near Tacoma Narrows (45 m depth), and the mouth of Hood Canal (Burns 1985, Babson et al. 2006, Yang and Khangaonkar 2008). Based primarily upon these features, which affect geomorphology, extent of freshwater influence and residence times, and oceanographic conditions, greater Puget Sound is often subdivided into five major basins or regions: 1) North Puget Sound, 2) Main Basin, 3) Whidbey Basin, 4) South Puget Sound, and 5) Hood Canal (Figure 4) When considered DPS designations for the petitioned species the Main Basin, Whidbey Basin, South Puget Sound and Hood Canal are collectively referred to as "Puget Sound Proper" Each of these basins differs in features such as temperature regimes, water residence and circulation, biological conditions, depth profiles and contours, processes, species, and habitats, described in more detail below.

On average, Puget Sound south of Admiralty Inlet has a depth of 62.5 m at low tide, but ranges to nearly 300 m at its deepest. Estuarine circulation in greater Puget Sound is driven by tidal currents, the surface outflow of freshwater from Puget Sound rivers and deep inflow of saltwater from the ocean, and wind strength and direction (NMFS 2007). Tidal currents dominate the circulation, and typically a two-layered pattern of estuarine circulation is superimposed on the tides (Ebbesmeyer et al. 1980). The average daily difference between high and low tide varies from 2.4 m at the northern end of greater Puget Sound to 4.6 m at its southern end. The movement of water due to tides is about 5–10 times larger than the actual estuarine circulation observed throughout the Sound. As the tidal currents flow past points of land, the water forms eddies in the lee of the points. These tidal eddies provide a transport mechanism for offshore water to reach the shoreline, bringing nutrients and plankton to nearshore communities. Tidal currents in the main basin of Puget Sound, a region with depths of 200 m or more, typically are less than 0.25 meter per second. In contrast, tidal currents in shallow sills at Admiralty Inlet and Tacoma Narrows can be as large as 2.2 and 3.3 m/s, respectively (NOAA, 1984).

Shallow sills within Puget Sound substantially reduce the flushing rate of freshwater, sediments, nutrients, contaminants and many organisms. Concentrations of nutrients (i.e., nitrates and phosphates) are consistently high throughout most of the greater Puget Sound, largely due to the flux of oceanic water into the basin (Harrison et al. 1994).

Coastal areas within Puget Sound generally are characterized by high levels of rainfall and river discharge in the winter, while inland mountains are characterized by heavy snowfall in the winter and high snowmelt in late spring and early summer. This local weather pattern creates two major periods of freshwater runoff into Puget Sound, with maxima in December and June). Freshwater inflow into the lower basins of Puget Sound is about 3.4 trillion liters /day. The major sources of freshwater are the Skagit and



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Snohomish Rivers located in the Whidbey Basin (Figure 4). However, the annual amount of freshwater entering Puget Sound is only 10 to 20% of the amount entering the Strait of Georgia, primarily through the Fraser River (NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-NWFSC-44). Water circulation, transport, and residence times within each basin are predicted to vary as much between years as between seasons, primarily due to the high degree of variability in river discharge (Babson et al. 2006).

Puget Sound has over 4,000 km of shorelines, ranging from rocky sea cliffs to coastal bluffs and river deltas. Most of Puget Sound's shorelines are coastal bluffs, which are composed of erodable gravel, sand, and clay deposited by glaciers over 15,000 years ago (Downing 1983; Shipman 2004). Extensive development of coastal bluffs along the Sound has led to the widespread use of engineered structures designed to protect upland properties, railroads, and roads. These modifications have increased dramatically since the 1970s with demonstrated negative impacts on the health of the ecosystem (Thom et al. 1994). A synthesis of the geomorphology and dynamics of Puget Sound's shorelines, and a discussion of shoreline mechanisms affected by armoring, is reviewed by Finlayson (2006).

Characteristics of the physical habitat such as depth, substrate, wave exposure, salinity, and gradient largely determine the plants and animals that can use particular areas of Puget Sound. Eight major nearshore habitats have been characterized and quantified: rocky reefs, kelp beds, mixed sediment intertidal beaches, salt marsh, tide flats, sub tidal soft sediments, eelgrass beds, and open water/pelagic habitats (Dethier 1990, Levings and Thom 1994, NMFS 2007). The shallow nearshore areas of Puget Sound contain vegetated eelgrass and seaweed habitats that support most marine fish and invertebrate species at some time during their life cycle. Kelp beds and eelgrass meadows cover the largest area (Figure 5 and Figure 6); floating kelps are found primarily over hard substrate along the Strait of Juan de Fuca and San Juan Islands whereas eelgrass beds are estimated to cover 200 km<sup>2</sup> throughout Puget Sound, with the exception of South Sound (Nearshore Habitat Program 2001, Mumford 2007). Other major habitats include sub aerial and intertidal wetlands (176 km<sup>2</sup>), and mudflats and sand flats (246 km<sup>2</sup>). In pelagic areas, the euphotic zone extends to about 20m in the relatively clear regions of Northern Puget Sound, and to 10m in the more turbid waters of the South Sound. Most of the bottom of Puget Sound is comprised of soft sediments, ranging from coarse sands to fine silts and clay. Rocky reefs, composed of bedrock or a mixture of boulder and cobble substrates, are often characterized by strong currents and tidal action and support benthic suspension feeders and multiple species of fish, including several species of rockfish (*Sebastes* spp.). Approximately 95% of the rocky reef habitat in greater Puget Sound is located in North Puget Sound (Palsson et al. 2008).

## **Oceanographic and Geomorphological Features of the Various Basins Relevant to DPS Determinations for Puget Sound rockfish**

### *Northern Puget Sound*

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Bathymetry and geomorphology. Northern Puget Sound encompasses southern Georgia Strait as well as the San Juan Islands and is demarcated to the west by the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca near Cape Flattery, to the south by the Olympic Peninsula and Admiralty Inlet, and to the east by Whidbey Island and the mainland between Anacortes and Blaine, Washington (Figure 4). The predominant feature of the North Sound is the Strait of Juan de Fuca, which is 160 km long and 22 km wide at its western end to over 40 km at its eastern end (Thomson 1994). Other notable geographic features include Admiralty Inlet, the San Juan Islands, and the southern part of the Georgia Strait.

One of the deepest sections of this region is near the western mouth (about 200 m) (Holbrook et al. 1980), whereas the deepest sections of eastern portions are located northwest of the San Juan Islands (340-380 m) (PSWQA 1987). Sub tidal depths range from 20 to 60 m in most of the northwest part of the region. Deeper areas near the entrance to the Main Basin north of Admiralty Inlet range from 120 to 180 m in depth (PSWQA 1987).

The vast majority (approximately 93%) of the rocky-reef habitat in greater Puget Sound is located in the Northern Puget Sound region. Pacunski and Palsson (1998) estimated that about 200 km<sup>2</sup> of shallow (<39 m MLLW) rocky-reef habitat was present in Northern Puget Sound, whereas only about 14 km<sup>2</sup> was found in the remaining Puget Sound basins.

Sediment characteristics. The surface sediment of the Strait of Juan de Fuca is composed primarily of sand, which tends to be coarse, including some gravel, toward the eastern portion of North Sound and gradually becomes finer towards the mouth (Anderson 1968). Many of the bays and sounds in the eastern portion of the North Sound have sub tidal surface sediments consisting of mud or mixtures of mud and sand (PSWQA 1987, WDOE 1998). The area just north of Admiralty Inlet is primarily gravel in its deeper portions, and a mixture of sand and gravel in its shallower portions, whereas the shallow areas north of the inlet on the western side of Whidbey Island and east of Protection Island consist of muddy-sand (Roberts 1979). The majority of the sub tidal surface sediments among the San Juan Islands consist of mixtures of mud and sand. Within the intertidal zone,  $61.2 \pm 49.7\%$  of the area also has mixed fine sediment and  $22.6 \pm 27.5\%$  has sandy sediment (Bailey et al. 1998).

Currents and tidal activity. The Strait of Juan de Fuca is a weakly stratified, positive estuary with strong tidal currents (Thomson 1994). The western end of the Strait is strongly influenced by ocean processes, whereas the eastern end is influenced by intense tidal action occurring through and near the entrances to numerous narrow passages which results in vigorous vertical mixing (Ebbesmeyer et al. 1984) (Figure 7). Seasonal variability in temperature and salinity is small because the waters are vertically well-mixed (Thomson 1994). On average, freshwater runoff makes up about 7% of the water by volume in the Strait and is derived primarily from the Fraser River. Generally, the circulation in the Strait consists of seaward surface flow of diluted seawater

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(<30.0psu) in the upper layer and an inshore flow of saline oceanic water (>33.0 psu) at depth (Thomson 1994, Collias et al. 1974). Exceptions include an easterly flow of surface waters near the shoreline between Port Angeles and Dungeness Spit (Figure 8), landward flows of surface waters in many of the embayments and passages, and flows of surface water southward toward the Main Basin near Admiralty Inlet (PSWQA 1987).

Water quality. Temperatures generally range between 7° and 11°C, although occasionally surface temperatures reach as high as 14°C (WDOE 1999). In the eastern portion of North Sound, temperature and salinity vary from north to south, with the waters in the Strait of Georgia being slightly warmer than the waters near Admiralty Inlet. Waters near Admiralty Inlet also tended to have higher salinities than waters to the north (WDOE 1999). Dissolved oxygen levels vary seasonally, with lowest levels of about 4 mg/L at depth during the summer months, and highest levels of about 8 mg/L near the surface during the winter. However, in a study conducted between 1996 and 1997, WDOE reported dissolved oxygen (DO) levels in the southern end of Discovery Bay below 3.0 mg/l (PSQAT 2000).

Macro vegetation. Eelgrass is the primary vegetation in the intertidal areas of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, covering  $42.2 \pm 27.2\%$  of the intertidal area (Figure 6), and ephemeral green algae (e.g., *Ulva* and *Enteromorpha* spp.) is the second most common covering  $4.4 \pm 3.7\%$  of the intertidal area (Nearshore Habitat Program 2001). About 45% of the shoreline of this region consists of kelp habitat, compared to only 11% of the shoreline of the other four Puget Sound proper Basins (Mumford 2007). Nevertheless, both areas each have approximately 50% of the total kelp resource. Most species of kelp are associated with shoreline exposed to wave action, whereas eelgrass is found in protected areas, such as Samish and Padilla Bays (Figure 5). Some of the densest kelp beds in greater Puget Sound are found in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Kelp beds at the north end of Protection Island declined drastically between 1989 and 1997, decreasing from about 181 acres to "nothing"; the cause of this decline is currently unknown (Mumford 2007).

Urban, industrial, and agricultural development. The North Puget Sound Basin is bordered primarily by rural areas with a few localized industrial developments (PSWQA 1988). About 71% of the area draining into North Puget Sound is forested, 6% is urbanized, and 15% is used for agriculture (NMFS 2007). Among the five greater Puget Sound basins, this basin is used most heavily for agriculture. The main human population in this area centers around Bellingham (71,289), Port Angeles (18,397), Anacortes (14,557), and Port Townsend (8,334) (US Census Bureau, 2003 population census). About 10% of the total amount of wastes discharged from point-sources into greater Puget Sound comes from urban and industrial sources in this basin (PSWQA 1988). About 17% of the nutrients (in the form of inorganic nitrogen) entering greater Puget Sound originates from rivers carrying runoff from areas of agricultural and forest production (Embrey and Inkpen 1998). The Washington Department of Natural Resources (Nearshore Habitat Program 2001) estimated that 21% of the shoreline in this area has been modified by human activities.

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### *Main Basin*

Bathymetry and geomorphology. The 100 km-long Main Basin is delimited to the north by a line between Point Wilson (near Port Townsend) and Partridge Point on Whidbey Island, to the south by Tacoma Narrows, and to the east by a line between Possession Point on Whidbey Island and Meadow Point (near Everett) (Figure 4) (Burns 1985). The western portion of the Main Basin includes such water bodies as Sinclair and Dyes inlets, and Colvos and Dalco passages. Large embayments on the east side include Elliott and Commencement bays.

Among of the most important bathymetric features of the Main Basin are the sills at its northern and southern ends. The sill at the north end of Admiralty Inlet is 30 km wide and rises to a depth of 65 m at its shallowest point. The sill at Tacoma Narrows is 45 m deep (Burns 1985). South of Admiralty Inlet, depths generally range from 100 to 140 m in the central part of the basin, and 10 to 100 m in the waterways west of Bainbridge and Vashon islands. The central basin consists of five sub-basins: 1) near the southern end of Admiralty Inlet, west of Marrowstone Island, with depths to 190 m, 2) near the southern tip of Whidbey Island with depths to 250 m, 3) west of Port Madison, north of Seattle with depths to 400 m, 4) northeast of West Point in Seattle with depths to 350 m, 5) south of Seattle, near Point Pulley, with depths to about 250 m (Burns 1985). Elliott and Commencement bays, associated with Seattle and Tacoma, respectively, are relatively deep, with depths in excess of 150 m. Freshwater flows into Elliott Bay through the Duwamish-Green River System, and into Commencement Bay through the Puyallup River.

Sediment characteristics. Sub tidal surface sediments in Admiralty Inlet tend to consist largely of sand and gravel, whereas sediments just south of the inlet and southwest of Whidbey Island are primarily sand (PSWQA 1987). Sediments in the deeper areas of the central portion of the Main Basin generally consist of mud or sandy mud (PSWQA 1987, WDOE 1998). Sediments in the shallower and intertidal areas of the Main Basin are mixed mud, sand, and gravel. Bailey et al. (1998) reported that 92% of the intertidal area of the Main Basin consisted of mixed sand and gravel. A similar pattern is also found in the bays and inlets bordering this basin.

Currents and tidal activity. About 30% of the freshwater flow into the Main Basin is derived from the Skagit River. The Main Basin is generally stratified in the summer, due to river discharge and solar heating, and is often well mixed in the winter due to winter cooling and increased mixing by wind. Circulation in the central and northern sections of the Main Basin consists largely of outflow through Admiralty Inlet in the upper layer and inflow of marine waters at depth (below approximately 50 m) (Figure 9) (Strickland 1983, Thomson 1994). Oceanic waters from the Strait of Juan de Fuca flow over the northern sill at Admiralty Inlet into the Main Basin at about two-week intervals (Cannon 1983). In the southern section, currents generally flow northward along the west side of Vashon Island and southward on the east side through Colvos Passage (Figure 9). The sill at Tacoma Narrows also causes upwelling that reduces the seawater/

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freshwater stratification in this basin. Sediment deposition from freshwater inflow accumulates at an estimated rate of 0.18 to 1.2 grams/cm<sup>2</sup>/year (Staubitz et al. 1997).

Major circulation patterns in the Main Basin are greatly influenced by decadal climate regimes (Ebbesmeyer et al. 1998). During cool periods with strong oceanic upwelling and heavy precipitation, the strongest oceanic currents entering from the Strait of Juan de Fuca flow near mid-depth when the basin is cooler than 9.7°C. However, the strongest oceanic currents move toward the bottom of the basin, during warmer, dryer periods when waters are warmer than 9.7°C.

Water quality. Water temperature, salinity, and concentration of dissolved oxygen in waters of the Main Basin are routinely measured by the WDOE at six sites (WDOE 1999). Subsurface temperatures are usually between 8° and 12°C; however, surface temperatures can reach 15°C to 18°C in summer, and temperatures at depth can get as low as 7.5°C in winter. Salinities in the deeper portions of the Main Basin are generally about 30 psu in summer and fall, but decrease to about 29 psu during the rainier months. Surface waters are also usually about 29 psu, but occasionally have salinities as low as 25-27 psu during the rainy season (WDOE 1999). The mid-basin has consistently higher temperatures and lower salinity relative to the Northern Puget Sound region (WDOE 1999). Dissolved oxygen varies seasonally, with lowest levels of about 5.5 mg/L occurring at depth in summer months, and highest levels of about 7.5 mg/L near the surface. Occasionally, summer-time highs reach 13-14 mg/L at the surface.

Macro vegetation. The Main Basin has a relatively small amount of intertidal vegetation, with 28.3 ± 10.4% of the intertidal area containing vegetation (Nearshore Habitat Program 2001). The predominant types are green algae (12.0 ± 4.4%) and eelgrass (11.4 ± 6.6%). Most eelgrass is located on the western shores of Whidbey Island and the eastern shores of the Kitsap Peninsula (Figure 6) (PSWQA 1987). A recent report by the Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team (PSWQAT 2000) indicates that only 8% of the shoreline has a continuous distribution of eelgrass beds and 40% of the shoreline has a patchy distribution.

Urban, industrial, and agricultural development. Areas bordering the Main Basin include the major urban and industrial areas of greater Puget Sound: Seattle, Tacoma, and Bremerton. Human population sizes for these cities are about 569,101, 196,790, and 39,597, respectively (2003 census) (US Census Bureau 2003). Approximately 70% of the drainage area in this basin is forested, 23% is urbanized, and 4% is used for agriculture (Staubitz et al. 1997). About 80% of the total amount of waste discharged from point-sources into greater Puget Sound comes from urban and industrial sources in this region (PSWQA 1988). Moreover, about 16% of the waste entering greater Puget Sound, overall, enters this basin through its major river systems, in the form of inorganic nitrogen (Embrey and Inkpen 1998). It is estimated that 52% of the shoreline in this area has been modified by human activities (Nearshore Habitat Program 2001).

### *Whidbey Basin*

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Bathymetry and geomorphology. The Whidbey Basin includes the marine waters east of Whidbey Island and is delimited to the south by a line between Possession Point on Whidbey Island and Meadowdale, west of Everett. The northern boundary is Deception Pass at the northern tip of Whidbey Island (Figure 4). The Skagit River (the largest single source of freshwater in greater Puget Sound) enters the northeastern corner of the Basin, forming a delta and the shallow waters (<20 m) of Skagit Bay. Saratoga Passage, just south of Skagit Bay, separates Whidbey Island from Camano Island. This passage is 100 to 200 m deep, with the deepest section (200 m) located near Camano Head (Burns 1985). Port Susan is located east of Camano Island and receives freshwater from the Stillaguamish River at the northern end and from the Snohomish River (the second largest of greater Puget Sound's rivers) at southeastern corner. Port Susan also contains a deep area (120 m) near Camano Head. The deepest section of the basin is located near its southern boundary in Possession Sound (220 m).

Sediment characteristics. The most common sediment type in the intertidal zone of the Whidbey Basin is sand, representing  $61.4 \pm 65.5\%$  of the intertidal area. Mixed fine sediments is the next most common sediment type covering  $25.6 \pm 18.9\%$  of the intertidal area (Bailey et al. 1998). Similarly, sub tidal areas near the mouths of the three major river systems are largely sand. However, the deeper areas of Port Susan, Port Gardner, and Saratoga Passage have surface sediments composed of mixtures of mud and sand (PSWQA 1987, WDOE 1998). Deception Pass sediments consist largely of gravel.

Currents and tidal activity. Although only a few water circulation studies have been performed in the Whidbey Basin, some general observations are possible. Current profiles in the northern portion of this basin are typical of a close-ended fjord. The surface waters from the Skagit River diverge, with the surface water flowing south and the deep water flowing northward toward Deception Pass. Approximately 60% of the water from the Skagit River flows through Deception Pass, and this water flows directly into the Strait of Juan de Fuca (Ebbesmeyer et al. 1984). Current speeds through Deception Pass are among the highest in Puget Sound; a westward surface current speed of 37.37 cm/sec, and an eastward bottom current of 5.92 cm/sec were reported by PSWQA (1987). Currents through Saratoga Passage tend to move at moderate rates in a southerly direction (Figure 10). Due to the influences of the Stillaguamish and Snohomish River systems, surface currents in Port Susan and Port Gardner tend to flow toward the Main Basin, although there is some evidence of a recirculating pattern in Port Susan (PSWQA 1987).

Water quality. The waters in this basin are generally stratified, with surface waters being warmer in summer (generally 10-13°C) and cooler in winter (generally 7-10°C) (Collias et al. 1974, WDOE 1999). Salinities in the southern section of the Whidbey Basin in Possession Sound are similar to those of the Main Basin. In Port Susan and Saratoga Passage, salinities of surface waters (27.0-29.5 psu) are generally lower than in the Main Basin, due to runoff from the two major rivers; moreover, after heavy

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rain these salinities range from 10-15 psu. However, salinities in deeper areas often parallel those of the Main Basin (WDOE 1999).

Concentrations of dissolved oxygen in the waters of the Whidbey Basin are routinely measured by the WDOE in Saratoga Passage and in Port Gardner (WDOE 1999). Concentrations were highest in surface waters (up to 15 mg/L) and tended to be inversely proportional to salinity. Samples collected during spring run-off had the highest concentrations of dissolved oxygen. The lowest values (3.5 to 4.0 mg/L) were generally found at the greatest depths in fall. However, in a study conducted between 1996 and 1997, WDOE reported DO levels in the west end of Penn Cove below 3.0 mg/L (PSWQAT 2000).

Macro vegetation. Vegetation covers  $23.6 \pm 8.8\%$  of the intertidal area of the Whidbey Basin (Nearshore Habitat Program 2001). The three predominant types of cover include green algae ( $6.8 \pm 6.2\%$ ), eelgrass ( $6.5 \pm 5.8\%$ ), and salt marsh ( $9.0 \pm 9.4\%$ ). Eelgrass beds are most abundant in Skagit Bay and in the northern portion of Port Susan (Figure 6) (PSWQA 1987).

Urban, industrial, agricultural, and development. Most of the Whidbey Basin is surrounded by rural areas with low human population densities. About 85% of the drainage area of this Basin is forested, 3% is urbanized, and 4% is in agricultural production. The primary urban and industrial center is Everett, with a 2003 population of 96,643 (U.S. Census Bureau 2003). Most waste includes discharges from municipal and agricultural activities and from a paper mill. About 60% of the nutrients (as inorganic nitrogen) entering greater Puget Sound, enter through the Whidbey Basin by way of its three major river systems (Embrey and Inkpen 1998). The WDNR (Nearshore Habitat Program 2001) estimated that 36% of the shoreline in this area has been modified by human activities.

### *Southern Puget Sound*

Bathymetry and geomorphology. The Southern Basin includes all waterways south of Tacoma Narrows (Figure 4). This basin is characterized by numerous islands and shallow (generally <20 m) inlets with extensive shoreline areas. The mean depth of this basin is 37 m, and the deepest area (190 m) is located east of McNeil Island, just south of the sill (45 m) at Tacoma Narrows (Burns 1985). The largest river entering the basin is the Nisqually River which enters just south of Anderson Island.

Sediment characteristics. A wide assortment of sediments are found in the intertidal areas of this basin (Bailey et al. 1998). The most common sediments and the percent of the intertidal area they cover are as follows: mud,  $38.3 \pm 29.3\%$ ; sand,  $21.7 \pm 23.9\%$ ; mixed fine,  $22.9 \pm 16.1\%$ ; and gravel,  $11.1 \pm 4.9\%$ . Sub tidal areas have a similar diversity of surface sediments, with shallower areas consisting of mixtures of mud and

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sand, and deeper areas consisting of mud (PSWQA 1987). Sediments in Tacoma Narrows and Dana Passage consists primarily of gravel and sand.

Currents and tidal activity. Currents in the Southern Basin are strongly influenced by tides, due largely to the shallowness of this area. Currents tend to be strongest in narrow channels (Burns 1985). In general, surface waters flow north and deeper waters flow south. Among the five most western inlets, Case, Budd, Eld, Totten, and Hammersley, the circulation patterns of Budd and Eld inlets are largely independent of those in Totten and Hammersley inlets due largely to the shallowness of Squaxin Passage (Ebbesmeyer et al. 1998). These current patterns are characterized by flows of high salinity waters from Budd and Eld inlets into the south end of Case Inlet, and from Totten and Hammersley inlets into the north end of Case Inlet. Flows of freshwater into the north and south ends of Case Inlet originate from surface water runoff and the Nisqually River, respectively.

Water quality. The major channels of the Southern Basin are moderately stratified compared to most other greater Puget Sound basins, because no major river systems flow into this basin. Salinities generally range from 27-29 psu, and, although surface temperatures reach 14-15°C in summer, the temperatures of subsurface waters generally range from 10-13°C in summer and 8-10°C in winter (WDOE 1999). Dissolved oxygen levels generally range from 6.5 to 9.5 mg/L. Salinity in the inlets tends to be similar to those of the major channels, whereas temperatures and dissolved oxygen levels in the inlets are frequently much higher in summer. Two of the principal inlets, Carr and Case inlets, have surface salinities ranging from 28-30 psu in the inlet mouths and main bodies, but lower salinities ranging from 27-28 psu at the heads of the inlets (Collias et al. 1974). Summertime surface waters in Budd, Carr and Case Inlets commonly have temperatures that range from 15-19°C and dissolved oxygen values of 10-15 mg/L. Temperature of subsurface water tends to be elevated in the summer (14-15°C); however, temperatures are similar to those of the main channels in other seasons of the year (WDOE 1999).

Macro vegetation. Among the five basins of greater Puget Sound, the Southern Basin has the least amount of vegetation in its intertidal area ( $12.7 \pm 15.5\%$  coverage), with salt marsh ( $9.7 \pm 14.7\%$  coverage) and green algae ( $2.1 \pm 1.9\%$  coverage) being the most common types (Nearshore Habitat Program 2001).

Urban, industrial, and agricultural development. About 85% of the area draining into this basin is forested, 4% is urbanized, and 7% is in agricultural production. The major urban areas around the South Sound Basin are found in the western portions of Pierce County. These communities include west Tacoma, University Place, Steilacoom, and Fircrest, with a combined population of about 100,000. Other urban centers in the South Sound Basin include Olympia with a population of 43,963 and Shelton with a population of 8,442 (U.S. Census Bureau 2003). Important point sources of wastes include sewage treatment facilities in these cities and a paper mill in Steilacoom.



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Furthermore, about 5% of the nutrients (as inorganic nitrogen) entering greater Puget Sound, enter into this basin through non-point sources (Embrey and Inkpen 1998). The WDNR (Nearshore Habitat Program 2001) estimated that 34% of the shoreline in this area has been modified by human activities.

### *Hood Canal*

Bathymetry and geomorphology. Hood Canal branches off the northwest part of the Main Basin near Admiralty Inlet and is the smallest of the greater Puget Sound basins, being 90 km long and 1-2 km wide (Figure 4). Like many of the other basins, it is partially isolated by a sill (50 m deep) near its entrance that limits the transport of deep marine waters in and out of Hood Canal (Burns 1985). The major components of this basin consist of the Hood Canal entrance, Dabob Bay, the central region, and the Great Bend at the southern end. Dabob Bay and the central region are the deepest sub-basins (200 and 180 m, respectively), whereas other areas are relatively shallow, <40 m for The Great Bend and 50-100 m at the Hood Canal entrance (Collias et al. 1974).

Sediment characteristics. Sediment in the intertidal zone consists mostly of mud ( $53.4 \pm 89.3\%$  of the intertidal area), with similar amounts of mixed fine sediment and sand ( $18.0 \pm 18.5\%$  and  $16.7 \pm 13.7\%$ , respectively) (Bailey et al. 1998). Surface sediments in the sub tidal areas also consist primarily of mud, with the exception of the Hood Canal entrance, which consists of mixed sand and mud, and the Great Bend and Lynch Cove, which have patchy distributions of sand, gravelly sand, and mud (PSWQA 1987, WDOE 1998).

Currents and tidal activity. Because the basin is a closed-ended fjord without large-volume rivers, aside from tidal currents, currents in Hood Canal are slow. The strongest currents tend to occur near the Hood Canal entrance and generally involve a northerly flow of surface waters into Admiralty Inlet (Ebbesmeyer 1984).

Water quality. Portions of Hood Canal are stratified, with marked differences temperature and dissolved oxygen between the entrance and the Great Bend. Water temperature, salinity, and concentration of dissolved oxygen in Hood Canal are routinely measured by the WDOE at two sites, near the Great Bend and near the entrance (WDOE 1999). Salinities generally range from 29-31 psu and tend to be similar at both sites. In contrast, temperature and dissolved oxygen values are often markedly different between the two sites.

Macro vegetation. Vegetation covers  $27.8 \pm 22.3\%$  of the intertidal area of the Hood Canal Basin. Salt marsh ( $18.0 \pm 8.8\%$ ) and eelgrass ( $5.4 \pm 6.3\%$ ) are the two most abundant plants (Nearshore Habitat Program 2001). Eelgrass is found in most of Hood Canal, especially in the Great Bend and Dabob Bay (Figure 6).

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Urban, industrial, and agricultural development. The Hood Canal Basin is one of the least developed areas in greater Puget Sound and lacks large centers of urban and industrial development. About 90% of the drainage area in this basin is forested (the highest percentage of forested areas of the five greater Puget Sound basins), 2% is urbanized, and 1% is in agricultural production (Staubitz et al. 1997). However, the shoreline is well developed with summer homes and year-around residences (PSWQA 1988). A small amount of waste is generated by forestry practices and agriculture. Nutrients (as inorganic nitrogen) from non-point sources in this basin represent only 3% of the total flowing into greater Puget Sound annually (Embrey and Inkpen 1998). The WDNR (Nearshore Habitat Program 2001) estimated that 34% of the shoreline in this area has been modified by human activities.

### **Environmental Features of Georgia Basin and the Strait of Georgia**

The Georgia Basin is an international water body that encompasses the marine waters of greater Puget Sound, and the Strait of Georgia. (Figure 11). The coastal drainage of the Georgia Basin is bounded to the west and south by the Olympic and Vancouver Island mountains and to the north and east by the Cascade and Coast mountains. At sea level, the Basin has a mild maritime climate and is dryer than other parts of the coast due to the rain shadow of the Olympic and Vancouver Island mountains. At sea level, air temperatures range from 0°C to 5°C in January and 12°C to 22°C in July, and winds are typically channeled by the local topography and blow along longitudinal axes of the straits and sounds. Winds are predominantly from the southeast in winter and the northwest in summer.

The Strait of Georgia (Figure 11) has a mean depth of 156 m (420 m maximum) and is bounded by narrow passages (Johnstone Strait and Cordero Channel to the north and Haro and Rosario straits to the south) and shallow submerged sills (minimum depth of 68 m to the north and 90 m to the south). The Strait of Georgia covers an area of approximately 6,800 km<sup>2</sup> (Thomson 1994) and is approximately 220 km long and varies from 18.5 to 55 km in width (Tully and Dodimead 1957, Waldichuck 1957). Both southern and northern approaches to the Strait of Georgia are through a maze of islands and channels, the San Juan and Gulf islands to the south and a series of islands to the north that extend for 240 km to Queen Charlotte Strait (Tully and Dodimead 1957). Both northern channels (Johnstone Strait and Cordero Channel) are from 1.5 to 3 km wide and are effectively two-way tidal falls, in which currents of 12-15 knots occur at peak flood (Tully and Dodimead 1957). However, both lateral and vertical constriction of water flow at the narrowest points in these northern channels are even more severe. Constrictions occur at Arran Rapids, Yuculta Rapids, Okisollo Channel, and to a lesser degree at Seymour Narrows (0.74 km wide, minimum depth of 90 m) in Discovery Passage (Waldichuck 1957). Overall, these narrow northern channels have only about 7% of the cross-sectional area as do the combined southern entrances into the Strait of Georgia (Waldichuck 1957).

Freshwater inflows are dominated by the Fraser River, which accounts for roughly 80% of the freshwater entering the Strait of Georgia. The Fraser River has a

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drainage area of 234,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Bocking 1997). The rate of flow in the Fraser River ranges from an average of 750 m<sup>3</sup>/sec in the winter to an average of 11,500 m<sup>3</sup>/sec during the spring freshet, although, flows of 20,000 m<sup>3</sup>/sec are not uncommon during the spring floods (Bocking 1997). Fraser River run-off and that of other large rivers on the mainland side of the Strait are driven by snow and glacier melt and their peak discharge period is generally in June and July. Rivers that drain into the Strait of Georgia off Vancouver Island (such as the Chemainus, Cowichan, Campbell, and Puntledge rivers) peak during periods of intense precipitation, generally in November (Waldichuck 1957).

Circulation in the Strait of Georgia occurs in a general counter-clockwise direction (Waldichuck 1957). Tides, winds, and freshwater run-off are the primary forces for mixing, water exchange, and circulation. Tidal flow enters the Strait of Georgia predominantly from the south creating vigorous mixing in the narrow, shallow straits and passes of the Strait of Georgia. The upper, brackish water layer in the Strait of Georgia is influenced by large freshwater run-off and salinity in this layer varies from 5 to 25 psu. Deep, high-salinity (33.5 to 34 psu), oceanic water enters the Strait of Georgia from the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The surface out flowing and deep inflowing water layers mix in the vicinity of the sills, creating the deep bottom layer in the Strait of Georgia, where salinity is maintained at about 31 psu (Waldichuck 1957). The basic circulation pattern in the southern Strait of Georgia is a southerly outflow of low-salinity surface water through the Rosario and Haro Straits (Crean et al. 1988) (Figure 12) with the northerly inflow of high salinity oceanic water from the Strait of Juan de Fuca at the lowest depths. In the winter, cool, low salinity near surface water mixes with the intermediate depth high-salinity waters; however, oceanic inflow is generally confined to the intermediate depths. Crean et al. (1988) reported that "the freshwater discharge finds primary egress through the southern boundary openings into the Strait of Juan de Fuca" and that subsurface waters (5 to 20 m below the region of the Fraser River discharge) also have "a predominantly southerly flow." Since surface water run-off peaks near the time of peak salinity of inflowing source water, the salinity of the deepwater in the Strait of Georgia undergoes only a small seasonal change in salinity (Waldichuck 1957).

## ***Genetic Differentiation***

The analysis of the geographical distribution of genetic variation is a powerful method of identifying discrete populations. In addition, such analysis can sometimes be used to estimate historical patterns of dispersal, equilibrium levels of migration (gene flow), and past isolation. Commonly used molecular genetic markers include protein variants (allozymes), microsatellite loci (variable numbers of short tandem DNA repeats), and mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA). One widely used method of population analysis is sequence or RFLP (restriction fragment length polymorphism) analysis of mtDNA, a molecular that codes for about a dozen genes that are not found in the cell nucleus. Mitochondrial DNA differs from nuclear DNA (nDNA) in two ways. One difference is that recombination is lacking in mtDNA, so that gene combinations (haplotypes) are passed unaltered from one generation to the next, except for new mutations. A second way is that mtDNA is inherited from only the maternal parent in most fishes, so that gene phylogenies correspond to female lineages. These characteristics permit

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phylogeographical analyses of mtDNA haplotypes, which can potentially indicate dispersal pathways for females and the extent of gene flow between populations (Avice et al. 1987). Although the lack of recombination allows for some types of analysis that are difficult to conduct with other markers (e.g., microsatellites), inferences of population structure (or lack thereof) from mtDNA are limited by the fact that the entire mitochondrial genome is inherited genetically as a single locus. Mitochondrial studies are therefore most useful for detecting deep patterns of population structure, and may not be very powerful for detecting structure among closely related populations.

Microsatellite DNA are nuclear markers that can potentially detect stock structure on finer spatial and temporal scales than can other DNA or protein markers, because of higher levels of polymorphism typically found in microsatellite DNA (reflecting a high mutation rate). Relatively high levels of variation can increase the statistical power to detect stock structure, particularly among closely related populations. In addition, microsatellite studies usually involve analysis of multiple genetic loci, which increases the power to detect differentiation among populations.

### **Overview of genetic variation in rockfish**

A principal challenge of rockfish genetic research has been to make generalizations about this ecologically diverse group of closely related species. With a few exceptions, it is not possible to make broad statements about patterns of radiation and divergence. For example, it is not the case that particular evolutionary clades correspond to particular morphological or ecological guilds. For example, species with more pelagic life histories are not necessarily more closely related to one another than they are to more demersal taxa. Instead, these traits appear to have evolved multiple times in different lineages. Moreover, the rockfish radiation appears to have been relatively abrupt, with pulses of diversification occurring approximately 9-8 MYA and 8-6 MYA, resulting in poor resolution of internal phylogenetic nodes (Hyde & Vetter 2007). A great deal of diversity exists among species, with frequent exceptions to otherwise general patterns or expectations. More effort will therefore need to be directed toward individual species and individual oceanographic boundaries before general insights can be gained.

Patterns of population differentiation vary within rockfish species, and range from no notable population structure over large geographic ranges, to isolation by distance (no strong discontinuities, but closer genetic affinities among nearby populations), to genetic structure corresponding to oceanographic features, to fine-scale differentiation on the scale of Puget Sound (Table 1). These patterns do not appear to follow particular life history attributes of rockfishes; rather, they appear to depend on a combination of factors including habitat, life history traits, and population dynamics. One important point, discussed further below, is that multiple studies have found evidence that rockfish inhabit geographically isolated areas, such as Puget Sound, tend to be genetically differentiated from other populations.

#### **Bocaccio (*Sebastes paucispinis*)**

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No published studies have compared genetic characteristics of bocaccio from Puget Sound and outer coastal areas, but there have been several studies of variation in bocaccio along the outer coast. Wishard et al. (1980) examined allozyme variation in nine coastal sampling locations ranging from Baja California to southern Oregon, with sample sizes ranging from  $n = 12$  to over 100 individuals per locality. They found two highly polymorphic loci and three others with low levels of variation. They found overlapping confidence intervals for allele frequencies across sampling locations and no evidence for differentiation among populations. More recently, Matala et al. (2004) examined genetic variation in bocaccio at seven microsatellite loci in samples ( $n = 30-67$ ) from eight locations from Baja California to British Columbia, including both sides of Point Conception. Samples were adults except in the Santa Barbara channel, where age-0 fish were taken. A contingency  $G$ -test across all samples and all loci provided significant ( $P = 0.037$ ) evidence for departures from global panmixia, indicating that coastal bocaccio are not a single randomly breeding population. A large-scale pattern of isolation by distance was not observed in the data, and levels of differentiation were extremely low ( $F_{ST}$  averaged over all loci and populations was  $-0.0001$ ). However, using a series of comparisons of smaller, geographically contiguous subsets of samples, the authors found some evidence that geographically proximate samples tended to be more similar genetically. The authors suggested that these results might best be explained by the interacting effects of oceanographic patterns and the species' life history, with current patterns restricting larval exchange in certain geographic areas. A reanalysis of the Matala et al. data conducted by Field et al. (2009) did not find any evidence of population structure among the coastal samples. Field et al. (2009) did conclude, however, that despite an apparent lack of genetic differentiation, there are sufficient demographic differences between northern and southern populations to suggest they are demographically independent.

#### **Canary rockfish (*Sebastes pinniger*)**

No published studies have compared genetic characteristics of canary rockfish from Puget Sound and outer coastal areas. The allozyme study mentioned above (Wishard et al. 1980), which examined large samples ( $n > 100$ ) from 8 coastal locations in northern California, Oregon, and Washington, found low levels of heterozygosity in this species and some evidence for stock structure. In particular, samples taken south of Cape Blanco (southern Oregon) lack an allele that occurs at low frequency in populations to the north. In some localities, allele frequencies at the PGM locus differed significantly between samples taken at different depths. Nine microsatellite loci have been developed for canary rockfish (Gomez-Uchida et al. 2003), but to date no genetic surveys have been published using these loci.

#### **Yelloweye rockfish (*Sebastes ruberrimus*)**

No published studies have compared genetic characteristics of yelloweye rockfish from Puget Sound and outer coastal areas. A Canadian study (Yamanaka et al. 2006) using nine microsatellite loci in yelloweye rockfish collected from Oregon to southeast Alaska found small allele frequency differences among all the coastal samples; however, three samples from the inside waters of Georgia Strait and Queen Charlotte Strait had significantly reduced levels of genetic variability and formed a distinctive genetic cluster.

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The authors suggested that these results imply restricted gene flow between inner and outer populations and a lower effective size for populations within the Strait of Georgia. Yamanaka et al. (2006) calculated  $F_{ST}$  values (a measure of genetic differentiation) among pairs of samples and found substantially higher values for comparisons of inside vs. outside populations than for comparisons among outside populations (mean  $F_{ST} = 0.017$  for inside-outside vs. 0.0008 for outside-outside). Subsequently, samples taken in 2005-2007 from waters between Vancouver Island and Mainland British Columbia have been screened at the same nine polymorphic microsatellite loci (R. Withler, personal communication July 2008). Preliminary analysis of these new samples shows that these patterns remain consistent: all the samples from inside waters form a coherent genetic cluster, and inside-outside comparisons typically yield much higher  $F_{ST}$  values than do comparisons of two outside samples or two inside samples (Figure 13). In the north, there appears to be a fairly sharp transition between inside and outside forms in the vicinity of the Gordon Channel. Whether a similar pattern occurs in the south is not known, as no samples from Puget Sound have been analyzed and only a single fish was collected from the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

#### **Greenstriped rockfish (*Sebastes elongatus*)**

Very little genetic information is available for greenstriped rockfish. A preliminary study of mitochondrial DNA control region sequences (J. Hess, unpublished data) compared data from coastal samples (British Columbia, Washington, and California) and samples collected from the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Preliminary results are consistent with those for coastal populations of other rockfish species: most haplotypes shared by more than one individual were found in all populations sampled, and the only significant pair wise comparison was Washington coast vs. California. However, sample sizes were low (12-40 individuals), so power to detect differences was also low. Furthermore, because no samples were available from Puget Sound proper, this preliminary study provided no information about the relationship between greenstriped rockfish in Puget Sound and the Pacific coast.

#### **Redstripe rockfish (*Sebastes proriger*)**

No published studies have examined population genetic structure of redstripe rockfish in the Northeast Pacific. The NWFSC is in the process of analyzing samples of redstripe rockfish, which are likely to be useful for future assessments.

#### **Population genetics of other rockfishes that include samples from Puget Sound**

As is clear from the discussion above, essentially no genetic data were available that included samples of the petitioned species from Puget Sound. The BRT, however, concluded that the biology and ecology of the petitioned species was sufficiently similar to species that have been subject to genetic analysis that did include samples from Puget Sound that patterns of variation from these “surrogate species” should be considered when evaluating potential DPS for the less studied petitioned species.

Despite the lack of genetic studies targeting the five species named in the current petition, some information is available for other rockfish species found in Puget Sound. Copper (*Sebastes caurinus*), brown (*S. auriculatus*), and quillback (*S. maliger*) rockfish

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are three closely related species that were the subject of a previous Biological Review Team, the results of which can be found in Stout et al. (2001). Both allozyme and microsatellite analysis of these three species found Puget Sound populations to be distinct from outer coastal populations, even when little or no differentiation was found among the coastal populations of the same species from California to Alaska (see Seeb 1998, Buonaccorsi et al. 2002, Buonaccorsi et al. 2005, Johansson et al. 2008). Estimated  $F_{ST}$  values for quillback rockfish were 0.005 in samples from northern California, Washington coast, and southeast Alaska, but jumped to 0.028 when Puget Sound samples were included (allozymes--Seeb 1998). Estimated  $F_{ST}$  values for copper rockfish were 0.007 among four coastal samples from southern California to British Columbia, but 0.087 between coastal and Puget Sound (microsatellites--Buonaccorsi et al. 2002). An additional microsatellite study of copper rockfish along the west coast from southern California to northern Washington measured an even lower  $F_{ST}$  of 0.004 (Johansson et al. 2008). Brown rockfish showed a similar pattern, with estimated  $F_{ST}$  values of 0.009 for coastal populations from Baja to California, and 0.057 with the inclusion of Puget Sound samples (Buonaccorsi et al. 2005). Alleles characteristic of brown and copper rockfish were found in quillback rockfish within Puget Sound, but not outside of Puget Sound, suggesting introgression may be occurring among these species within Puget Sound (Seeb 1998), which may in part be contributing to their distinctiveness from coastal populations.

In addition to studies brown, quillback and copper rockfish and yelloweye rockfish, a study of Pacific ocean perch (*S. alutus*) found patterns of genetic variation that indicated the existence of three separate populations within British Columbia, one on the west side of Vancouver Island, and two populations co-occurring to some extent on the east and west sides of the Queen Charlotte Islands (Withler et al. 2001). The study looked at five microsatellite loci, and this pattern was maintained for samples collected in March through September.

### **Genetic differentiation of other marine fishes in Puget Sound**

Several non-rockfish species have been studied in- and outside of Puget Sound, including Pacific hake (*Merluccius productus*), Pacific cod (*Gadus macrocephalus*), walleye pollock (*Theragra chalcogramma*), lingcod (*Ophiodon elongatus*), and herring (*Clupea pallasii*), with a variety of conclusions reached regarding population differentiation (Table 2). These species are very different from rockfishes in their biology and life histories. The first three species were the subjects of a Biological Review Team in 2000 (Gustafson et al. 2000). Allozyme analyses in Pacific hake showed differentiation between Puget Sound and Strait of Georgia populations (Iwamoto et al. 2004) as well as between offshore and Puget Sound regions (Utter and Hodgins 1971). Herring from Puget Sound and the Strait of Georgia showed considerable similarity among sampling sites with two exceptions (Cherry Point in the Strait of Georgia and Squaxin Pass in southern Puget Sound) (Small et al. 2005). Differences in spawn timing (Cherry Point) and physical isolation (Squaxin Pass) were suggested as the factors leading to the differentiation seen.

The remaining species showed little evidence of genetic differentiation. Pacific cod sampled from Puget Sound to the Yellow Sea showed only two distinct genetic

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groupings as differentiated by allozymes, a North American group and a western North Pacific group (Grant et al. 1987). Walleye Pollock, too, show population structure only at an ocean-basin scale (O'Reilly et al. 2004). No evidence of genetic differentiation was found using both allozymes and microsatellites in lingcod among populations from Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the outer Washington coast (LeClair et al. 2006).

Taken together, the dearth of information on genotypic distributions and temporal genetic variation indicate that additional research is needed to identify appropriate sampling and data collection strategies to fully characterize genetic relationships among Puget Sound Rockfish populations. The lack of genetic data hampered the BRT in making its DPS determinations, and additional genetic studies would be useful for making better informed conclusions regarding DPS structure of the petitioned rockfish species in Puget Sound.

### **Other Marine Fish DPS Designations**

To further inform DPS determinations, the Puget Sound rockfish BRT reviewed the size and complexity of other designated DPSs of marine fish that have undergone the status review process and have been considered both discrete and significant to their respective biological species. By comparing DPS determinations among species with a variety of life history attributes, the BRT sought to gain insight on what types of life history traits influence population structure, as it pertains to the ESA. DPS's have been designated for portions of the range of Pacific hake (*Merluccius productus*), Pacific cod (*Gadus macrocephalus*), walleye pollock (*Theragra chalcogramma*) (NMFS 2000), copper rockfish (*Sebastes caurinus*), quillback rockfish (*S. maliger*), brown rockfish (*S. auriculatus*) (NMFS 2001), bocaccio (*S. paucispinis*) (NMFS 2002), and smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*) (NMFS 2003). Several marine fish DPSs cover geographic areas larger than the Georgia Basin. For example, Pacific cod and walleye pollock DPSs extend from Puget Sound to Southeast Alaska. Two West Coast DPSs of the bocaccio were designated off Washington and Oregon [the northern DPS] and off California and Mexico [the southern DPS] (MacCall and He 2002), and all smalltooth sawfish in U.S. waters were designated a single DPS.

At smaller geographic scales, a Georgia Basin Pacific hake DPS was separate from coastal hake, and three DPSs each of copper and quillback rockfish (Puget Sound Proper DPS, Northern Puget Sound DPS, and coastal DPS) and two of brown rockfish (Puget Sound Proper DPS and coastal DPS) were identified. Some of these marine fish DPSs (e.g., Pacific herring) include a number of identifiable subpopulations with numerous isolated spawning locations and a substantial level of life history and ecological diversity (Gustafson et al. 2000, Stout et al. 2001b).

Of particular interest to the current BRT, the previous BRT assembled to consider Puget Sound populations of copper rockfish (*S. caurinus*), quillback rockfish (*S. maliger*), and brown rockfish (*S. auriculatus*) (Stout et al. 2001) faced similar questions to the current petition regarding the DPS designation for rockfish found in inland marine waters of Washington state. With regard to discreteness, Stout et al. (2001) based their DPS decisions largely on genetic data that were directly relevant to the three species in question, as well as life history traits and the environmental features of Puget Sound. With regard to significance, Stout et al. (2001) primarily noted the distinct ecology of



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Puget Sound which differs substantially from other marine areas as well as the range gap that would result from the extinction of Puget Sound populations. A brief summary of the evidence used to make the DPS decisions follows, listed by species.

Stout et al. were unanimous in their decision for a Puget Sound proper DPS for copper rockfish, distinct from a North Puget Sound DPS (including the Canadian Gulf Islands) and a coastal DPS, based primarily on genetic evidence. Allozyme and RFLP data from Seeb (1998) showed no particular genetic divergence for Puget Sound proper specimens, but microsatellite data from Wimberger (in prep) and Buonaccorsi et al. (in prep) showed large differences among populations from within Puget Sound proper and populations found outside Puget Sound proper. Wimberger sampled copper rockfish from California, British Columbia, the San Juan Islands, the Canadian Gulf Islands, Admiralty Inlet, Central Puget Sound, and Hood Canal (the latter three populations are found within Puget Sound proper). Wimberger found significant divergence between both Central Puget Sound and Admiralty Inlet populations, and all populations found outside of Puget Sound proper. Equal divergence was found among Puget Sound proper populations compared with San Juan, Gulf Island, and coastal populations as well.

Buonaccorsi et al. (in prep, subsequently published as Buonaccorsi et al. 2002) used a different set of microsatellite loci to compare populations from Puget Sound proper, Canadian Gulf Islands, Queen Charlotte Islands, and coastal California. They also found highly significant divergence among all sampling sites, indicating a clear divergence between populations within Puget Sound proper and the Canadian Gulf Islands. Buonaccorsi et al. also identified private alleles in Puget Sound proper, further evidence for isolation of Puget Sound proper populations from other neighboring regions. In addition to genetic information, Stout et al. pointed out that copper rockfish are live-bearing and have internal fertilization, a short pelagic larval stage, and high habitat fidelity. All of these traits, combined with the physical isolation of Puget Sound proper, could lead to reproductive isolation of the Puget Sound proper DPS.

Stout et al. (2001) were somewhat divided regarding the appropriate DPS for quillback rockfish, but 66% of the BRT supported a Puget Sound proper DPS, as distinct from a North Puget Sound DPS and a coastal DPS. The preponderance of evidence was again genetic, from Seeb (1998) and Wimberger (in prep). Seeb (1998) sampled four sites within Puget Sound proper, one in the San Juan Islands, and coastal sites from California, Washington, and Alaska. Both allozyme and RFLP analyses indicated large differences in allele frequencies between Puget Sound proper and the San Juan Islands. When the Puget Sound proper samples were removed from the analysis, however, no significant divergence was found among the remaining populations. Wimberger (in prep) found significant differences in microsatellite allele frequencies between Puget Sound proper and the San Juan Islands. The San Juan Island population was more similar to Sitka, Alaska, than it was to Puget Sound proper. In addition to the genetic data, quillback rockfish have very similar life history traits to copper rockfish (as stated above) leading the previous BRT to conclude that a Puget Sound proper DPS was appropriate for quillback rockfish as well.

Brown rockfish have a distribution that is very different from copper and quillback rockfishes, as they are found in Puget Sound proper but only rarely occur in North Puget Sound, Georgia Basin, or the Washington and Oregon coastline (Stout et al. 2001). The large disconnect between Puget Sound proper and coastal populations of

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brown rockfish suggested to the previous BRT that the Puget Sound proper population might be a remnant population in an ecologically unique habitat. Genetic data available at the time supported a divergence between Puget Sound proper and California populations (Seeb 1998). Stout et al. noted that a microsatellite study was underway which would also compare coastal and Puget Sound populations (subsequently published, Buonaccorsi et al. 2005). Buonaccorsi et al. sample three sites within Puget Sound Proper, and compared them to coastal populations ranging from California to Mexico. They found significant divergence among the populations, and even between two of the Puget Sound proper populations. Puget Sound proper populations exhibited extremely low genetic divergence compared to coastal samples, which suggested to the authors a potential founder effect combined with reproductive isolation, and/or a low effective population size.

### **Methodology for incorporating uncertainty in DPS Designations**

To allow for uncertainty in identifying the boundaries of Puget Sound rockfish DPSs, the BRT adopted a “likelihood point” method, often referred to as the “FEMAT” method because it is a variation of a method used by scientific teams evaluating options under President Clinton’s Forest Plan (Forest Ecosystem Management: An Ecological, Economic, and Social Assessment Report of the Forest Ecosystem Management Assessment Team [FEMAT, <http://www.or.blm.gov/ForestPlan/NWFPTitl.htm>]). This method has also been used in all recent status review updates for federally listed Pacific salmon and steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) ESUs (e.g., Good et al. 2005) as well as reviews of killer whales (Krahn et al. 2002, 2004) and herring (Gustafson et al. 2006).

In this approach, each BRT member distributes ten “likelihood” points among a number of proposed DPS scenarios, reflecting their opinion of how likely that proposal correctly reflects the true DPS configuration (Table 3). Thus, if a member were certain that the DPS scenario that contains Puget Sound rockfish was Puget Sound proper, he or she could assign all 10 points to that scenario. A member with less certainty about DPS boundaries could split their points among two, three, or even more DPS scenarios. Ultimately each BRT member distributed their 10 “likelihood points” amongst these 4 possible DPS scenarios. With nine BRT members, for each species there were a total of 90 likelihood points distributed among the DPS scenarios.

### **DPS Scenarios**

After consideration of hydrography and bathymetry of Puget Sound and the Georgia Basin, the life history of the petitioned species, patterns of population structure for marine fish generally, and previous DPS designations for Puget Sound species, the BRT developed 4 possible DPS scenarios that could incorporate the petitioned Puget Sound rockfish species:

1. DPS Scenario 1 (Puget Sound Proper) is a Puget Sound Proper DPS identical to the Puget Sound Proper DPS defined by Stout et al. (2001) for copper, quillback and brown rockfish. This scenario posits a DPS consisting of the members of the species in questions inhabiting the waters south or east of Admiralty Inlet and Deception Pass. This is the DPS structure that was identified in the petition.

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2. DPS Scenario 2 (Greater Puget Sound) hypothesizes a DPS that includes Puget Sound Proper and Northern Puget Sound (which includes the San Juan and Canadian Gulf Islands).

3. DPS Scenario 3 (Puget Sound/Georgia Basin) hypothesizes a DPS that includes all inland marine water east of the central Strait of Juan de Fuca and south of the northern Strait of Georgia.

4. DPS Scenario 4 (Coastal DPS) consists of a coastal DPS, whose northern and southern terminus were not defined, but which also includes the region described in DPS Scenario 3.

### **Factors considered in common to all species**

Based on the earlier DPS designations for copper rockfish, quillback rockfish and brown rockfish (Stout et al. 2001), the BRT generally assumed that in the absence of information indicating otherwise, the five petition species were likely to have DPS in inland marine waters distinct from coastal populations. The reasoning for this is that the ecological and environmental factors considered by Stout et al. (2001) and reviewed in earlier sections of this report – including the relatively site-attached nature of rockfish, the unique features of the Georgia Basin /Puget Sound ecosystem compared to the outer coast, and the environmental features of Puget Sound that serve to limit the potential for migration – all apply more or less equally to all rockfish, not just the three species considered by Stout et al. (2001). The BRT also noted that relatively large genetic differences have been found between inner (Puget Sound and/or Strait of Georgia) and outer (California Current) populations for every rockfish species for which such comparisons have been made. This suggests that the same patterns might be expected in other rockfish species, unless their life history differs in ways that might have a substantial affect on dispersal and connectivity. The BRT therefore concluded that, in the absence of other information, rockfish of all species that inhabit the Georgia Basin and/or Puget Sound are likely to meet the ‘discreteness’ criteria of the DPS policy.

The BRT also concluded that, in the absence of other information, all rockfish species in Georgia Basin or Puget Sound that are discrete are also likely to meet the ‘significance’ criteria of the DPS policy. As highlighted earlier in this document and in Appendix B, Puget Sound-Georgia Strait is a unique environment, and the environmental conditions experienced by rockfish in this region are distinct from those elsewhere in their range. In particular, Puget Sound circulation is highly influenced by freshwater input, relatively shallow sills limit exchange among subbasins of the system, waters are typically highly stratified for some of the year, the bathymetry results in a very limited shallow water habitat, and there is a strong link between biogeochemical dynamics in freshwater watersheds and the marine system. These features, among others, make the Puget Sound – Georgia Strait region substantially different than the rest of the California Large Marine Ecosystem.

Below, we discuss what specific additional information was available for each of the petitioned species, and how the BRT used this information (or lack thereof) to come to conclusions regarding Distinct Population Segments.

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## **I. Bocaccio**

DPS Scenario 3 (Puget Sound/Georgia Basin) received the most votes (43 pts), followed by DPS Scenario 4 (part of coastal DPS; 32 pts) and DPS scenario 1 (Puget Sound Proper; 15 pts).

### **Discreteness of the DPS**

As was discussed above, the BRT generally assumed that all rockfish are likely to have at least one DPS in inland marine waters. Thus, the approach of the BRT was to evaluate the evidence contradicting or supporting this assumption. The absence of published studies comparing genetic characteristics of bocaccio from Puget Sound and outer coastal areas required the BRT to evaluate other less direct measures of discreteness.

The BRT noted that studies of coastal bocaccio populations have found little genetic differentiation over large geographic distances (discussed above). In addition, compared to some other rockfishes, bocaccio appear to have greater potential to move long distances (see life-history summary above) than some rockfishes, suggesting that a DPS for bocaccio could encompass a greater area than DPS for more sedentary species such as copper rockfish, quillback rockfish, and brown rockfish. Thus, the BRT considered the hypothesis that Puget Sound bocaccio are either the result of a rare recruitment event and were never a viable population distinct from the coastal populations, or are regularly connected to coastal populations by dispersal. The only evidence available to address this hypothesis was length-frequency data (Figure 14). Using these data, the BRT used Von Bertalanffy growth parameters for bocaccio (from Tolimieri and Levin 2005) to convert length to age. Since the year fish were sampled is known, it is then possible to estimate the birth year of fish. These estimates revealed strong year classes in 1967, 1976-78, and 1993 (Figure 15). In contrast, the strong coastal year classes were 1962-1963, 1978, 1989, and 1999. Given that the ages the BRT estimated were approximate, it is possible that there is some correspondence between the strong late 1970s year classes in Puget Sound and the coast. However, the strong 1989 and 1999 coastal year classes are virtually absent in Puget Sound. Similarly, the strong 1967 and 1993 Puget Sound year classes do not correspond to strong coastal year classes. Importantly, Tolimieri and Levin (2005) used data from the California populations of bocaccio, and thus these patterns should be interpreted with some caution. However, substantial spatial synchrony in recruitment of several rockfish species that have been studied occurs at the scales of 500-1000km (Field and Ralston 2005). In addition, the BRT noted that the 1999 year class was strong for many rockfish in the northern portion of the California Current (e.g., Stewart 2007, Hammel 2008), suggesting to the BRT that the strong 1999 recruitment for bocaccio south of Cape Mendicino was likely to have also occurred in more northerly locations.

These size frequency data also revealed the presence of individuals large enough to be sexually mature (Figure 14). Given the retentive circulation patterns of Puget Sound, the BRT discussed that a significant fraction of larvae released by Bocaccio (especially in more inland portions of the Sound), could be retained within the Sound.

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Taken together, the limited available information on bocaccio provides some evidence supporting the hypothesis that Puget Sound and coastal populations are discrete. In their deliberations, the BRT considered this evidence suggestive of an inland DPS rather than conclusive.

The final distribution of BRT votes on DPS scenarios reflected uncertainty resulting from the lack of direct genetic evidence. Forty-eight percent of the votes were cast for Scenario 3, the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin DPS. A DPS that included the coastal populations (Scenario 4) also received significant support (35% of the votes). A Puget Sound Proper DPS also received some votes (16%). Thus, while the BRT recognized that there is some evidence supporting a coastal DPS, on balance, the BRT did not consider this evidence strong enough to refute the starting assumption of an inland DPS.

### **Significance of the DPS**

In addition to the factors considered in common to all rockfish species discussed above, the BRT noted that Puget Sound-Georgia Strait is distant from the center of the bocaccio distribution (in California, as discussed above), suggesting that the Puget Sound populations occupy a particularly unique environment for this species.

### **Relationship to coastal DPSs**

In a previous ESA status review of bocaccio off the California coast, MacCall and He (2002) determined that there were at least two DPSs of coastal bocaccio, a southern and a northern DPS, with the boundary between them occurring at the California/Oregon border. The Puget Sound/Georgia Basin bocaccio DPS identified in this status review is therefore a third bocaccio DPS, distinct from both the southern and northern coastal DPSs.

## **II. Yelloweye rockfish**

DPS Scenario 3 (Puget Sound/Georgia Basin) received the most support (49 pts), followed by DPS Scenario 1 (Puget Sound Proper; 34 pts) and DPS Scenario 4 (part of a coastal DPS; 7 pts). Although BRT members thus concluded that DPS Scenario 3 is most compatible with available information for yelloweye rockfish, substantial uncertainties remain, especially with regard to the extent dispersal between Puget Sound and the Georgia Strait.

### **Discreteness of the DPS**

In addition to the general consideration in common to all rockfish species summarized above, members of the BRT used a several lines of evidence to support their identification of a Puget Sound/Georgia Basin DPS for yelloweye rockfish. In particular,

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Yamanaka et al. (2006) and R. Withler (unpublished data) report on genetic differences in this species between samples from inland marine waters. Their samples, collected from interior waters between Vancouver Island and the mainland British Columbia, formed a discrete genetic cluster that differed consistently from coastal samples. The BRT took this as reasonable evidence suggesting that yelloweye rockfish from the Georgia Basin are also likely to be genetically differentiated from coastal population.

In addition, two aspects of the life history of yelloweye rockfish discussed earlier favor genetic and potentially demographic isolation. First, as both adults and juveniles yelloweye rockfish are tightly associated with rocky substrata (or invertebrates associated with hard substrate). Such habitat is infrequent and patchy in its distribution in North Puget Sound and the Georgia Strait, and is very rare in Puget Sound inside Admiralty Inlet. Secondly, yelloweye rockfish show very limited movement as adults. Thus, any disruption in gene flow resulting from the retentive patterns of circulation of the Puget Sound – Georgia Strait is reinforced by the lack of adult movement.

Given the available genetic data and life history of yelloweye rockfish in concert with the hydrography of the region, the BRT largely ruled out DPS scenarios 2 and 4. While genetic information indicates that Puget Sound Proper might be genetically distinct from the rest of the region, the BRT relied on historic distributional information and the habitat availability in its assessment. In particular, the BRT felt the historical abundance of yelloweye rockfish was greater in North Puget Sound (Appendix A, and Palsson et al. 2008), and this was the result of the lack of appropriate rocky habitat in Puget Sound Proper (Palsson et al 2008). Thus, even if Puget Sound Proper supported, at times, a semi-discrete subpopulation, the BRT was not convinced that it would be distinct demographically or ecologically from yelloweye rockfish inhabiting the greater Georgia Basin. As a result, the BRT concluded that the DPS should extend northward to include the San Juan Islands and Georgia Strait where rockier habitat is available and yelloweye rockfish are currently found.

### **Significance of the DPS**

(See Above “Factors in considered in common to all species”.)

### **Relationship to other DPS**

The BRT concluded that Puget Sound/Georgia Basin yellowtail rockfish are a DPS distinct from coastal yellowtail rockfish populations. The coastal populations of yellowtail rockfish therefore consist of one or more DPS distinct from the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin DPS. The BRT’s focus was on the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin population that was the subject of the petition, and the BRT therefore made no attempt to determine if coastal populations of yellowtail rockfish consist of a single versus multiple additional DPS.

### **III. Canary rockfish**

DPS Scenario 3 (Puget Sound/Georgia Basin) received the most support (58 pts), followed by DPS Scenario 4 (part of a coastal DPS; 17 pts) and DPS scenario 1 (Puget

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Sound Proper; 15 pts). BRT members agreed that DPS Scenario 3 coincides best with available information for canary rockfish, although substantial uncertainties remain, especially with regard to the extent of the northern Puget Sound and Strait of Georgia boundaries.

### **Discreteness of the DPS**

As was the case for other species, the fact that all available genetic information suggests considerable separation among populations of rockfish dwelling in California Current versus Georgia Basin suggested to the BRT that there was a high probability that similar partitioning would occur in canary rockfish. Thus, the BRT did not believe that a combined coastal/inland DPS (Scenario 4) was likely, although it did receive some support due to the relatively high potential for movement in this species. However, due to this high movement potential, a separation of Puget Sound Proper from the Georgia Strait also seemed unlikely to the BRT. Examination of historical records of abundance and distribution revealed large populations of canary rockfish in South Puget Sound (Appendix A). While abundant in South Sound, the BRT felt that this segment of the population would not be distinct from the portion of the population north of Admiralty inlet because of the propensity for adult movement in canary rockfish.

### **Significance of the DPS**

(See Above “Factors in considered in common to all species”)

### **Relationship to other DPS**

The BRT concluded that Puget Sound/Georgia Basin canary rockfish are a DPS distinct from coastal canary rockfish populations. The coastal populations of canary rockfish therefore consist of one or more DPS distinct from the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin DPS. The BRT’s focus was on the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin population that was the subject of the petition, and the BRT therefore made no attempt to determine if coastal populations of canary rockfish consist of a single versus multiple additional DPS.

## **IV. Redstripe rockfish**

DPS Scenario 1 (Puget Sound Proper) received the most votes (40 pts), followed by DPS Scenario 3 (Puget Sound/Georgia Basin; 31 pts) and DPS scenario 4 (part of coastal DPS; 19 pts).

### **Discreteness of the DPS**

No genetic data were available for this species at the time of the status review, although the NWFSC is in the process of analyzing some samples. Compared to other rockfish species, redstripe rockfish tend to occur in the mud/sand habitat that characterized much of Puget Sound Proper. With very little information to go on, the BRT therefore largely relied on the information from other species, particularly the previous status review of copper, quillback and brown rockfish (Stout et al. 2001) to

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make DPS conclusions. In particular, the BRT found no compelling information to suggest that populations of redstripe rockfish in Puget Sound Proper would be any less distinct from other Georgia Basin populations than was the case for the previously reviewed species.

### **Significance of the DPS**

Consistent with the earlier conclusions of Stout et al. (2001), the BRT concluded that Puget Sound Proper is an ecologically unique environment distinct from other parts of Georgia Basin. In addition, the BRT noted that historical records indicated a long-standing presence of this species in Puget Sound Proper (Appendix A).

### **Relationship to other DPS**

The BRT concluded that Puget Sound Proper redstripe rockfish are a DPS distinct from redstripe rockfish in other parts of the Georgia Basin and coastal populations. Redstripe rockfish outside of Puget Sound Proper therefore consist of at least one, and possibly more than one, additional DPS. The BRT did not attempt to determine how many additional DPS of redstripe rockfish may exist.

## **V. Greenstriped rockfish**

DPS Scenario 1 (Puget Sound Proper) received the most votes (41 pts), followed by DPS Scenario 3 (Puget Sound/Georgia Basin; 31 pts) and DPS scenario 4 (part of a coastal DPS; 18 pts).

### **Discreteness of the DPS**

Almost no genetic data were available for this species, and no genetic samples were available from Puget Sound Proper. Compared to other rockfish species, greenstriped rockfish tend to occur in the mud/sand habitat that characterized much of Puget Sound Proper. With very little information to go on, the BRT therefore largely relied on the information from other species, particularly the previous status review of copper, quillback and brown rockfish (Stout et al. 2001) to make DPS conclusions. In particular, the BRT found no compelling information to suggest that populations of greenstriped rockfish in Puget Sound Proper would be any less distinct from other Georgia Basin populations than was the case for the previously reviewed species.

On the other hand, the BRT also noted that the Strait of Juan de Fuca contains areas of good habitat for greenstriped rockfish, as reflected in survey trawl catch records there and in the Strait of Georgia. However, the BRT noted that this species was not captured in a large area north of Admiralty Inlet and south of San Juan Islands, which supports the concept of Puget Sound proper as a discrete population. Countering this, some BRT members thought that the apparent interannual variability in greenstriped rockfish biomass in Puget Sound observed in the WDFW trawl survey could result from movement into North Puget Sound from coastal populations. Thus, the BRT was unable to reach a firm conclusion on the boundaries of this DPS, although based on the general



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considerations discussed above for all rockfish the BRT concluded that a DPS in inland marine waters distinct from the coast was likely.

### **Significance of the DPS**

Consistent with the earlier conclusions of Stout et al. (2001), the BRT concluded that Puget Sound Proper is an ecologically unique environment distinct from other parts of Georgia Basin. In addition, the BRT noted that historical records (Appendix A) indicated a long-standing presence of this species in Puget Sound Proper.

### **Relationship to other DPS**

The BRT concluded that Puget Sound Proper greenstriped rockfish are a DPS distinct greenstriped rockfish in other parts of the Georgia Basin and coastal populations. Greenstriped rockfish outside of Puget Sound Proper therefore consist of at least one, and possible more than one, additional DPS. The BRT did not attempt to determine how many additional DPS of greenstriped rockfish may exist.

### ***Western Boundary of the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin canary rockfish, Bocaccio, and yelloweye rockfish DPSs.***

The BRT noted that the Strait of Juan de Fuca is a transition zone between the oceanic waters of the California Current and inland waters of Puget Sound/Georgia Basin. There was general agreement among BRT members that there is unlikely to be a sharp boundary that separates populations residing in these two systems. Consequently, the BRT noted there is uncertainty about the exact of location of the western boundary of the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin DPSs for bocaccio, yelloweye rockfish and canary rockfish. The BRT considered two possible western boundaries: 1) the Sekiu River and 2) the Victoria Sill (Figure 17). The Sekiu River is used as the western boundary in the WDFW assessment of rockfishes (Palsson et al., 2008). The BRT considered the Sekiu River a precautionary boundary in that it is very unlikely that any biologically relevant divisions would occur west of that point. The Victoria Sill bisects the Strait of Juan de Fuca and runs from east of Port Angeles north to Victoria (Figure 17). This sill is a significant oceanographic feature in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The deep oceanic water in the Juan de Fuca Strait extends up to a depth of about 100m at the Pacific end of the strait, and its thickness diminishes along the strait to just a few meters at the Victoria sill (Masson, 2002). Patterns of circulation created by the sill create discontinuities in temperature, salinity (Masson & Cummins, 2000), nitrogen (Mackas & Harrison, 1997), primary production (Foreman et al., 2008), and water column organic carbon (Johannessen et al., 2008). The Victoria Sill also appears to have the potential to restrict larval dispersal (Engie & Klinger, 2007, Paul Chittaro, NWFSC, unpublished data).

Using the FEMAT voting procedure described previously, BRT members distributed 10 votes among the two western boundary options. Victoria Sill received 43 votes, while the Seikiu River received 17 votes (note that 3 BRT members were absent for this vote). Thus, the BRT concluded that the Victoria Sill is the more likely western

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Boundary for the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin DPSs, although there is clearly some uncertainty in this designation.

## **THE "EXTINCTION RISK" QUESTION**

### ***APPROACHES TO THE DETERMINATION OF EXTINCTION RISK***

#### The "Extinction Risk" Question

The ESA (Section 3) defines "endangered species" as "any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range." "Threatened species" is defined as "any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range." NMFS considers a variety of information in evaluating the level of risk faced by a DPS, including: 1) absolute abundance of fish and their spatial and temporal distributions, 2) current abundance in relation to historical abundance and carrying capacity of the habitat, 3) trends in abundance, based on indices such catch statistics, catch per unit effort (CPUE), and spawner-recruit ratios, 4) natural and human-influenced factors that cause variability in survival and abundance, 5) possible threats to genetic integrity (e.g., selective fisheries and interactions between cultured and natural populations), and 6) recent events (e.g., climate change and changes in management) that have predictable short-term consequences for the abundance of a DPS. Additional risk factors, such as disease prevalence or changes in life-history traits, also may be considered in the evaluation of risk to a population.

#### Absolute Numbers

The absolute abundance of individuals in a population is important in assessing two aspects of extinction risk. First, population sizes of small populations can be an indicator of whether the population can sustain itself in the face of environmental fluctuations and small-population stochasticity, even if the population currently is stable or increasing. This conclusion follows from consideration of Allee effects and the theory of minimum viable populations (MVP) (Gilpin and Soulé 1986, Thompson 1991). Second, present abundance in a declining population is an indicator of the time expected until the population reaches critically low numbers. This follows from the idea of "driven extinction" (Caughley and Sinclair 1994). In addition to absolute abundance, the spatial and temporal distributions of adults are important in assessing risk to a DPS. Spatial distribution is important, both at the scale of the spawning population and the metapopulation.

Assessments of marine fish populations have focused on determining abundance and trends from models fit to catch, survey and biological data. Catch records, fishery and survey CPUE, and biomass estimates from research cruises constitute most of the data available to estimate abundance. The estimated numbers of reproductive adults is the most important measure of abundance in assessing the status of a population. Data on

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other life-history stages can be used as a supplemental indicator of abundance. In the case of the five petitioned species, very little information is available on their absolute abundance in the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound area. The BRT therefore focused largely on trends in various abundance indices, which are described in greater detail below.

### Historical Abundances and Carrying Capacity

The relationship of present abundance to present carrying capacity is important for evaluating the health of a population, but a population with abundance near the carrying capacity of the habitat it occupies does not necessarily indicate that the population is healthy. Population abundances near carrying capacity imply that the effectiveness of short-term management actions is limited in increasing population abundance. The relationship between current abundance and habitat capacity to the historical relationship between these variables is an important consideration in evaluating risk. An understanding of historical conditions provides a perspective of the conditions under which present populations evolved. Estimates of historical abundances also provide the basis for establishing long-term abundance trends. Comparisons of past and present habitat capacity can also indicate long-term population trends and potential problems stemming from population fragmentation.

### Trends in Abundance

Short- and long-term trends in abundance are primary indicators of risk in natural populations. Trends may be calculated with a variety of quantitative data, including catch, CPUE, and survey data. Trend analyses for the five species considered in this status review are greatly limited by the lack of long time series of abundances in greater Puget Sound for these species. In addition, although abundance time series are available for other, more common, Puget Sound rockfish species, these time series are characterized by a lack of regular sampling, by use of different survey methods for a species, and, for harvest data, by the imposition of harvest regulations. The BRT took several approaches to utilize the best available data in order to estimate the abundance trends, and these are discussed in greater detail below.

### Factors Influencing Abundance

Several natural and anthropogenic factors influence the degrees of risk facing populations of marine fish in greater Puget Sound. Recent changes in these factors may influence the degree of risk of a population without apparent changes in abundance, because of time lags between the events and the effects on the population. Thus, a consideration of these effects extends beyond the examination of recent trends in abundance. The BRT considered documented physical and climatic changes, but did not consider possible effects of recent or proposed conservation measures. Population variability in itself may not be an indication of risk. Habitat degradation and harvest have most likely weakened the resilience of populations in greater Puget Sound to climate variability and impacts such as predation by other species.

## Threats to Genetic Integrity

Artificial propagation and enhancement of populations in greater Puget Sound does not presently appear to be a risk factor for the species considered here. However, mariculture of some species is under development, and the effects of hatchery releases (either of the species in questions or of species that prey upon or compete with the petitioned species) on natural populations may be important in the future. The interbreeding of cultured and natural fish can potentially lead to a loss in fitness of naturally-spawning populations. The genetic effects of artificially-propagated releases of species with high fecundities, as is common for many marine fishes, could be substantial. Ryman and Laikre (1991), Waples and Do (1994), and Ryman et al. (1995) discussed possible risks associated with enhancement of marine populations, but these risks are difficult to quantify and to incorporate into risk analysis. The chief concern is that the release of propagated fish, which may be inadvertently modified by breeding practices and novel-rearing environments, may lead to the erosion of genetic diversity and fitness in natural populations. In addition, there are ecological risks, such as predation or competition, to be considered when evaluating the effects of releasing propagated fish.

Human activities, other than population enhancement, can also influence the genetic characteristics of natural populations. These include size-selective harvest methods (Nelson and Soulé 1987); introductions of non-native species; and alterations of marine habitats by shoreline development, increased siltation in river runoff, and pollution. At the present time, empirical information documenting the genetic effects of these kinds of changes is largely lacking.

## Climate Variability

Coupled changes in atmospheric and ocean conditions have occurred on several different time scales and have influenced the geographical distributions, and hence local abundances, of marine fishes. On time scales of hundreds of millennia, periodic cooling produced several glaciations in the Pleistocene Epoch (Imbrie et al. 1984, Bond et al. 1993). The central part of greater Puget Sound was covered with ice about 1 km thick during the last glacial maximum about 14,000 years ago (Thorson 1980). Since the end of this major period of cooling, several population oscillations of pelagic fishes, such as anchovies and sardines, have been noted on the West Coast of North America (Baumgartner et al. 1992). These oscillations, with periods of about 100 years, have presumably occurred in response to climatic variability. On decadal time scales, climatic variability in the North Pacific and North Atlantic Oceans has influenced the abundances and distributions of widespread species, including several species of Pacific salmon (Francis et al. 1998, Mantua et al. 1997) in the North Pacific, and Atlantic herring (Alheit and Hagen 1997) and Atlantic cod (Swain 1999) in the North Atlantic. Recent declines in marine fish populations in greater Puget Sound may reflect recent climatic shifts. However, we do not know whether these climatic shifts represent long-term changes or short-term fluctuations that may reverse in the near future.

## Size distributions

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Size data provides some insight about the degree to which populations of the petitioned species were the result of rare (even single) recruitment events versus multiple, less episodic events. The former may indicate that Puget Sound represents a sink population that is part of a larger DPS, while the latter is more suggestive of a self-sustaining population. Secondly, length-frequency data provides information about the degree to which large size classes have been removed from the populations, the implications of which are discussed in detail under the section on threats.

### Risk-Assessment Methods

One of the greatest difficulties in the status review process is organizing a large amount of information regarding the biology of the species, genetics, and population trends over time. Often, the ability to measure or document risk factors is limited, and information is not quantitative and is very often lacking altogether. In assessing risk, it is often important to include both qualitative and quantitative information. In previous NMFS status reviews, BRTs have used a “risk matrix” as a method to organize and summarize the professional judgment of a panel of knowledgeable scientists. This approach is described in detail by Wainright and Kope (1999) and has been used in Pacific salmonid status reviews (e.g., Good et al. 2005, Hard et al. 2007), as well as in reviews of Pacific hake, walleye pollock, Pacific cod (Gustafson et al. 2000), Puget Sound rockfishes (Stout et al. 2001b), Pacific herring (Stout et al. 2001a; Gustafson et al. 2006), and black abalone (Butler et al. 2008).

In this risk matrix approach, the collective condition of individual populations is summarized at the DPS level according to four demographic risk criteria: abundance, growth rate/productivity, spatial structure/connectivity, and diversity. These viability criteria, outlined in McElhany et al. (2000), reflect concepts that are well founded in conservation biology and are generally applicable to a wide variety of species. These criteria describe demographic risks that individually and collectively provide strong indicators of extinction risk. The summary of demographic risks and other pertinent information obtained by this approach is then considered by the BRT in determining the species’ overall level of extinction risk.

Population viability analysis (PVA) is generally defined as the use of quantitative methods to predict the future status of a population. Future status typically refers to the probability of the population reaching some minimum size within some specified time horizon. Because of data limitations described below, the BRT did not conduct a formal quantitative PVA. However, as detailed in the following sections, data were available that allowed an estimate in the trend in abundance of rockfishes, and this information was considered by the BRT.

After reviewing all relevant biological information for the species, each BRT member assigned a risk score (see below) to each of the four demographic criteria. The scores were tallied (means, modes, and range of scores), reviewed, and the range of perspectives discussed by the BRT before making its overall risk determination. Although this process helps to integrate and summarize a large amount of diverse information, there is no simple way to translate the risk matrix scores directly into a determination of overall extinction risk. For example, a DPS with a single extant sub-population might be at a high level of extinction risk because of high risk to spatial structure/connectivity, even if it exhibited low risk for the other demographic criteria.

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Another species might be at risk of extinction because of moderate risks to several demographic criteria.

*Scoring Population Viability Criteria*—Risks for each demographic criterion are ranked on a scale of 1 (very low risk) to 5 (very high risk):

1. **Very Low Risk.** Unlikely that this factor contributes significantly to risk of extinction, either by itself or in combination with other factors.
2. **Low Risk.** Unlikely that this factor contributes significantly to risk of extinction by itself, but some concern that it may, in combination with other factors.
3. **Moderate Risk.** This factor contributes significantly to long-term risk of extinction, but does not in itself constitute a danger of extinction in the near future.
4. **High Risk.** This factor contributes significantly to long-term risk of extinction and is likely to contribute to short-term risk of extinction in the foreseeable future.
5. **Very High Risk.** This factor by itself indicates danger of extinction in the near future.

*Recent events*—The “recent events” category considers events that have predictable consequences for DPS status in the foreseeable future but have occurred too recently to be reflected in the demographic data. Examples include a climatic regime shift or El Niño that may be anticipated to result in increased or decreased predation in subsequent years. This category is scored as follows:

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| ++ (double plus):  | expect a strong improvement in status of the DPS; |
| + (single plus):   | expect some improvement in status;                |
| 0 :                | neutral effect on status;                         |
| - (single minus):  | expect some decline in status;                    |
| -- (double minus): | expect strong decline in status.                  |

### ***Data Reviewed by the BRT***

The demographic risk data reviewed by the BRT are summarized in this preliminary report. Information, in addition to those submitted as part of the Administrative Record, that were most useful as sources of both quantitative and qualitative data pertinent to the demographic risk analysis is described below and also in Appendix D.

#### **Recreational fishery data**

The main data available on Puget Sound rockfish trends are from surveys of recreational anglers conducted by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) (Bargmann 1977; Buckley 1967, 1968, 1970; Palsson 1988; Palsson et al. 2008). These

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data are collected from punch cards sent in by licensed anglers and from dockside surveys. WDFW extrapolates the rockfish per angler data up to total catch using an estimate of number of trips derived from the salmon recreational fishery (Palsson et al. 2008). The data are reported both for the targeted catch (targeting bottomfish) and the incidental catch (targeting salmon). For the trend analyses here only the data from the fishery targeting bottomfish were used. The data for Puget Sound Proper (punch card areas 8-13, Figure 18), north Puget Sound (punch card areas -Figure 18), and all Puget Sound (punch card areas 5-13 - Figure 18) are plotted in Figure 19. The raw numbers are given Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6. Note that all sources analyze the same raw data (the WDFW creel survey data), but different adjustments have been made to the data.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Canada) has also conducted a creel survey of the recreational fishery in the waters of the Strait of Georgia (DFO statistical areas 13-19, 28 and 29). We did not include these data in the trend analyses because the effort data (angler trips) and catch data (total rockfish) that we were able to obtain included both salmon-targeted and groundfish-targeted trips. Information on trends of bocaccio, canary rockfish, and yelloweye rockfish in Canadian waters in the Strait of Georgia are included in the subsections on individual species.

The recreational data have numerous limitations reviewed in Palsson et al. (2008). In particular, during 1994 to 2003, the total catch was still estimated using salmon fishery data, yet restrictions on the salmon fishery lead to limited information from the salmon fishery. In addition, the bag limit on rockfish was lowered from 15 fish in 1983 to 1 rockfish per trip in both the north Puget Sound and Puget Sound Proper in 2000. Reductions in bag limits both directly reduces the fish per trip by capping the maximum and may lead to changes in angler targeting leading to reductions in the number of rockfish taken per trip. To correct for the effects of bag limits and changes in angler targeting, the trend analyses treat each bag limit period as a separate dataset and a scaling parameter to adjust the mean for each period is estimated.

### **Commercial data**

Commercial data with effort information is available from records on the bottom trawl fishery operating until 1988 (PMFC 1979; Holmberg 1967; Schmitt et al. 1991). Effort data (hours trawled) are available from 1955 (Table 7). While other commercial fisheries have been operated in Puget Sound, there was no effort information available. Data for other gears were reported as ‘tons per landing’, but ‘landing’ is an inconsistent effort metric so these data are not reported. Due to concerns about CPUE from commercial fisheries being unrelated to actual population abundances, these data were not used for the trend analyses.

### **WDFW trawl survey**

Data from the WDFW trawl survey (a fishery independent survey) were included in the trend analysis. The survey is described in detail by Palsson et al. (2008). These trawl surveys cover 1987-2000, are depth stratified and done in twelve regions (Table 8). The sampling is somewhat episodic with some regions sampled infrequently, only once, or only at the beginning or the end of the survey (Table 8). Four main regions, Central Sound, Georgia Basin (US waters), Hood Canal, and the South Sound were sampled most frequently and with the greatest temporal consistency. Sampling effort was also uneven

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with some regions having as few as two replicate hauls in a depth zone in a given year while others may have as many as 25 replicate hauls. The rocky habitat used by bocaccio, canary rockfish and yelloweye rockfish is not effectively sampled by trawl gear, while the unconsolidated habitat used by redstripe rockfish and greenstriped rockfish can be trawled effectively. As a result, we used the WDFW trawl survey primary with respect to the latter two species.

Examination of the raw trawl samples indicated that the redstripe rockfish data contain what appear to be outlier events. In particular, the estimates in 2002 and 2005 in south Puget Sound were increased upward by a single trawl sample in each year with extremely large numbers of redstripe rockfish. While redstripe rockfish comprised 1-2% of the survey in 1987, 1989, 1991, and 1996, in 2002 and 2005 they comprised 39% and 48%, respectively (Figure 20, Figure 21, see also Figure 22). Redstripe rockfish are known to occur in dense aggregations, thus outlier events such as these are not surprising. For the trend analyses, redstripe rockfish were removed for the calculation of ‘total rockfish’. The ‘total rockfish’ estimated abundances with redstripe rockfish removed are shown in

Table 9.

### **REEF dive surveys**

Another data source included in the trend analysis is sightings of rockfish by recreational scuba divers throughout the Puget Sound as part of a program by REEF.org (REEF, 2008) that trains recreational divers to identify and record fish species during recreational dives. The data are reported in abundance categories: single = single fish, few = 2-10 fish, many = 11-100 fish, and abundant = 100+ fish. The REEF database was used to determine presence/absence per dive (at any abundance) and also to determine ‘min’ and ‘max’ rockfish by using the upper and lower ends of the categories to convert the categorical levels to numerical levels. The data for ‘all rockfish’ in the REEF database are shown in

Table 9.

### ***Additional Information on Rockfish Distribution and Abundance in Puget Sound***

In addition to the data sources described above, the BRT reviewed numerous historical documents, short-term research projects, and graduate theses from regional Universities (Appendix A). In general, historical reports confirm that the five petitioned species have consistently been part of the Puget Sound fish fauna. For example, Kincaid (1919) noted that the family Scorpaenidae constituted “one of the most important and valuable groups of fishes found on the Pacific Coast”. He produced an annotated list of Puget Sound fishes that documented thirteen species of rockfish that were known to inhabit Puget Sound, including two of the petitioned species: the “orange rockfish” (*S. pinniger*) that was “abundant in deep water”, and the “red rockfish or red snapper” (*S. ruberrimus*), the largest of this group, “common in deep water” and “brought to market in



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considerable quantities”. Smith (1936) provided one of the first scientific reports on Puget Sound commercial fisheries focused on the fleet of otter trawlers which targeted flatfish landed for market in Seattle. The fishery occurred primarily over relatively soft-bottom areas. Seven rockfish species were indicated as being taken by this fishery, including three of the petitioned species “orange rockfish” (*Sebastes pinniger*), “red snapper” (*S. ruberrimus*), and “olive-banded rock cod” (*S. elongatus*). Haw and Buckley’s (1971) text on saltwater fishing in Washington marine waters, including Puget Sound, was designed to popularize recreational sport (hook and line) fishing in the region to the general public. Fishing locations and habitat preferences were indicated for three species of rockfish: canary, yelloweye, and bocaccio. Canary rockfish were found at depths over 150’ and were not restricted to rocky bottom areas. This species occurred in certain locations as far south as Pt Defiance and was taken in good numbers at Tacoma Narrows, but was considered more abundant in the San Juan Islands, north Puget Sound, and Strait of Juan de Fuca. Rockfish were found at depths over 150’ on rocky bottoms, and primarily occurred in north Puget Sound, the Strait, and the outer coast. Finally, bocaccio were frequently caught in the Tacoma Narrows.

Two documents (Delacy et al. 1972, Miller and Borton 1980) compiled all available data on Puget Sound fish species distributions and relative number of occurrences since 1971/1973 from the literature (including some records noted above), fish collections, unpublished log records, and other sources. Twenty-seven representative of the family Scorpaenidae are listed in these documents, including all five species considered in this status review (total records indicated in parentheses): greenstriped rockfish (54): most records occur in Hood Canal, although also collected near Seattle, primarily associated with otter trawls; Bocaccio (110): most records occur from the 1970’s in Tacoma Narrows and Appletree Cove (near Kingston) associated with sport catch; canary rockfish (114): most records occur from the 1960-70’s in Tacoma Narrows, Hood Canal, San Juan Islands, Bellingham, and Appletree Cove associated with sport catch; redstripe rockfish (26): most records are from Hood Canal sport catch, although a few were also taken in Central Sound/Seattle; yelloweye rockfish (113): most records occur from the early 1970’s in the San Juan Islands (Sucia Island) and Bellingham Bay associated with the sport catch.

## **Summary of previous assessments**

The WDFW conducted an extensive review of the current status of all Puget Sound rockfishes (Palsson et al. 2008). This review included a review of historic patterns of abundance, results of WDFW surveys, ecosystem stressors and a qualitative risk assessment. Palsson et al. note a precipitous decline in several species of rockfish, including bocaccio, yelloweye rockfish and canary rockfish. They concluded that fishery removals (including bycatch from other fisheries) are highly likely to limit recovery of depleted rockfish populations in Puget Sound. In addition, they establish habitat disruption, derelict fishing gear, low dissolved oxygen, chemical toxicants and predation as moderate threats to Puget Sound rockfish populations.

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WDFW evaluated the status of rockfishes in Puget Sound using information on fishery landings trends, surveys, and species composition trends (Musick 1999; Musick et al. 2000). Their evaluation was based on the American Fisheries Society's (AFS) Criteria for Marine Fish Stocks. This method makes use of biological information and life history parameters such as population growth rates, age at maturity, fecundity, maximum age, etc. These parameters in concert with information regarding population trends are used to classify populations as depleted, vulnerable, precautionary or healthy. WDFW interpreted depleted to mean that there is a high risk of extinction in the immediate future, while vulnerable was considered to be likely to be endangered or threatened in the near future. Precautionary was interpreted to mean that populations were reduced in abundance, but that population size was stable or increasing.

After applying the AFS criteria, WDFW concluded that Yelloweye rockfish were depleted in both Northern and Southern Puget Sound. Canary rockfish were also considered depleted in Northern and Southern Puget Sound. Greenstriped rockfish and redstripe rockfish were both considered to be healthy. Bocaccio were concluded to have a precautionary status. The precautionary status of bocaccio was the result of a lack of information for bocaccio as well as their increased rarity in Southern Puget Sound.

An evaluation on the status of yelloweye rockfish was prepared for the Canadian Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). COSEWIC concludes that there are two designatable units (DU) of yelloweye rockfish in Canada: an "inside" DU that encompasses the Strait of Georgia, Johnstone Strait and Queen Charlotte Strait, and an "outside" DU that extends from southeast Alaska to northern Oregon. The two DUs are distinguished on the basis of genetic information indicating restricted gene flow, and age at maturity. For the inside DU submersible surveys in 1984 and 2003 showed statistically nonsignificant declines in mean, median and maximum sightings per transect. Commercial handline and longline CPUEs declined 59% and 49% respectively. Age and length information indicates that the proportion of old individuals declined into the early 1990s. Overall, the COSEWIC report concludes that yelloweye rockfish abundance has declined more than 30% in 1/3 of a generation.

COSEWIC also conducted status reviews for canary rockfish and bocaccio; however, these reports focused on coastal populations. In both cases, populations were concluded to be threatened.

Coastal populations of yelloweye rockfish, canary rockfish and bocaccio are considered "overfished" by the Pacific Fisheries Management Council. A previous ESA status review of the southern bocaccio DPS (California and Mexico) determined that the DPS had declined to 3.6% of its estimated unfished biomass in 2002, but that the DPS had a low probability of extinction if rebuilding catch rates were maintained (MacCall and He 2002).

### ***Species composition trends***

Species frequency data has been collected as part of WDFW's monitoring of the recreational fisheries and for a limited number of years for the commercial fisheries. Data

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prior to 1975 are available from Bargmann (1977) and Buckley (1967, 1968, 1970). From 1975-1986, WDFW published the Washington State Sport Catch Reports (WDF, 1975-86) which report estimates of species frequency information in the recreational catch. For 1980-2007, specifically see Table 7.5 of Palsson et al (2008), which summarizes the species identification data. Likewise, specifically see Table 6.1 in Palsson et al (2008) which summarizes the data from the commercial fisheries.

The precision of the species frequencies may be influenced by small sample sizes. Sample sizes are not reported for the pre-1980 years; however the noise in the early data, especially from the Buckley and Bargmann reports, is suggestive of low sample size. The noise in the early data may also be due to inconsistent identification or changes in which species were categorized as 'unclassified'. In addition to these limitations, bag limits in the recreational fishery likely have affected the species frequencies in the catch. A bag limit was imposed in 1983, and further reduced in 1994 and 2000. This may have led to discarding of less desirable (smaller) species.

Despite the limitations, the recreational data in particular show some patterns. The three most common species during 1965-2007 in the North Puget Sound (black rockfish, copper rockfish and quillback rockfish) and Puget Sound Proper (brown rockfish, copper rockfish, and quillback rockfish) increased in proportion from 1980 through 1990 and currently comprise approximately 90% of the recreational catch (Figure 23). Four of the five petitioned species (bocaccio, canary rockfish, greenstriped rockfish, and yelloweye rockfish) became progressively less frequent in the recreational catch during the same time period (Figure 23). However, during 1988 to 1993, declines were not seen in the commercial gear that catch bocaccio (set line and set net in south Puget Sound), canary rockfish (bottom trawl and set line in north Puget Sound) and yelloweye rockfish (multiple gear types in north Puget Sound). Thus the commercial data, while much more limited in number of samples than the recreational data, contradicts this pattern of declines in the petitioned species in the 1980s and 1990s. Recent data for the commercial fisheries have not been collected to our knowledge.

### **Bocaccio**

Bocaccio was infrequently recorded in the recreational catch data reported by Buckley and Bargmann for Puget Sound Proper from the mid-1960s into the early 1970s (Table 10). However, bocaccio were reported up to 8-9% of the catch in the late-1970s from the Washington State Sport Catch Reports (WDF 1975-86) (see generally Figure 24 and Figure 25). The majority of the catch (66%) during 1975-1986 was from punch card area 13 (as reported in the WA Sport Catch Reports); Point Defiance and the Tacoma Narrows were historically reported as local areas of high bocaccio abundance in punch card area 13. Bocaccio appear to have declined in frequency, relative to other species, from the 1970s to the 1980s to the 1990s. From 1975-1979, bocaccio were reported as an average of 4.63% of the catch (sample size unknown; reference WA State Sport Catch Reports). In 1980-1989, they were 0.24% of the 8430 rockfish identified (Palsson et al. 2008). From 1996 to 2007, bocaccio have not been observed out of the 2238 rockfish identified in the dockside surveys of the recreational catches (Palsson et al. 2008). In a sample this large, the probability of observing at least 1 bocaccio would be 99.5% assuming it was at the same frequency (0.24%) as in the 1980s. Also, (as expected as a

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result of their habitat preferences) bocaccio have not been observed in the WDFW fisheries independent trawl surveys (specifically see Table 7.5 in Palsson et al. 2008).

In conclusion, there is strong support in the data for a decline in the frequency of bocaccio relative to other species in Puget Sound Proper (Figure 24 and Figure 25). The magnitude of the decline cannot be ascertained since we have no estimates of its current frequency. We do know that although rare, bocaccio rockfish were present in Puget Sound Proper into the current decade. In the WDFW size surveys, bocaccio have been recorded in 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998, (punch card areas 5, 6, and 7). The latest record in the size database is 1999 when four fish were recorded (3 from punch card area 13 and one from punch card area 11). There is one report of a bocaccio sighting (2-10 fish) in punch card area 11 (central Puget Sound at the Les Davis Pier Artificial Reef in Commencement Bay, Tacoma) in 2001 from a REEF scuba survey. This is the last reported identification we have of bocaccio in the Puget Sound Proper.

In North Puget Sound, bocaccio have always been rare in the surveys of the recreational fishery (Table 11 and Table 12). In the Strait of Georgia, bocaccio have been documented in some inlets, but records are sparse, isolated, and often based on anecdotal reports (COSEWIC, 2002). Bocaccio have not been noted in any fishery-independent longline, submersible, or jig surveys conducted for bottomfishes throughout the Strait of Georgia over the past two decades (Yamanaka et al. 2004). Furthermore, they do not appear in any recreational catch records, although rockfish were not identified to species until the last decade (DFO 2008).

### **Canary rockfish**

Canary rockfish occur more consistently in the recreational catch than bocaccio and yelloweye rockfish, but are still infrequently observed (typically 1-2% in Puget Sound Proper and 2-5% in north Puget Sound). Like bocaccio, canary rockfish appear to have become less frequent in the catch data since 1965 (Table 13 (recreational data), Table 14 (recreational data), Table 15 (commercial data) and Figure 26 and Figure 27 ). From 1980-1989, they were reported at a frequency of 1.1% (sample size 8430) and 1.4% (sample size 3910) in south and north Puget Sound respectively. From 1996-2001, they were reported at a frequency of 0.73% (sample size 550) and 0.56% (sample size 1718) in south and north Puget Sound respectively. The decadal trends along with 95% confidence intervals for the data with sample sizes are shown in Figure 26. Note the early data do not report sample size (number of individuals identified) thus the uncertainty in the early estimates cannot be calculated. Species misidentification should not be a problem for canary rockfish, but their reported frequency may be affected by non-random reporting of species in the catch in the 1960s and early 1970s. The tables from Buckley and Bargmann (1965-1973) suggest that only a few (2-3) common species were being recorded in some punch card areas.

Since 2002, fishing for canary rockfish is prohibited and thus no frequency data are available from the recreational fishery since then. Canary rockfish have not been observed in the WDFW fisheries independent trawl surveys (see specifically Table 7.5 in Palsson et al. (2008). In the REEF scuba data REEF (2008), canary rockfish were not observed in the first three years of the survey, 1998-2000, when the number of dives was 100-130 per year. Since 2001, however, the number of dives per year has increased substantially, to 400-1000 dives per year, and canary rockfish have been reported

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consistently since 2001 in 0.5 to 3.6% of dives with no evidence of a temporal decline in sightings (REEF 2008). Canary rockfish have been documented in the Strait of Georgia (see Figure 28 for statistical reporting areas), but the overwhelming research focus is on the large stocks that are commercially harvested off the west coast of Vancouver Island and in Queen Charlotte Strait (COSEWIC in press). The prevalence of this species in recreational fishing in the Strait of Georgia indicates that they are probably well distributed but rare (1% total rockfish catch) in enclosed waters and inlets (DFO 2008). However, wide interannual variations in some recreational catch data suggests that catch estimates may be unreliable due to poor species identification and changing bag limits (COSEWIC in press). Recent long-line surveys throughout the Strait of Georgia collected ten canary rockfish individuals from two shallow sets in statistical areas 16 and 17. All were adults (mean size 529 cm) in post-spawning condition Lohead and Yamanaka (2007). They have also been documented in Georgia Strait jig surveys Yamanaka et al. (2004).

### **Yelloweye rockfish**

Yelloweye rockfish occur more consistently in the recreational catch than bocaccio but at lower frequency than canary rockfish and are still infrequently observed (typically 1-2% in Puget Sound Proper and 2-5% in north Puget Sound). The frequency of yelloweye rockfish in Puget Sound Proper appears to have increased from a frequency of 0.34% (sample size 8430) in 1980-1989 to a frequency of 2.7% (sample size 550) in 1996-2001 (Figure 29 and Table 16). There were three recent years (1999-2001) when yelloweye rockfish were not reported in the recreation catch, however the sample sizes were low these years and zeros are expected for an infrequent species when sample sizes are low.

In North Puget Sound, in contrast, the frequency of yelloweye rockfish decreased between the 1980s and 1990s in the catch surveys (Table 17 (recreational data) and Table 18 (commercial data)). From 1980-1989, they were reported at a frequency of 1.9% (sample size 3910), and from 1996-2001, they were reported at a frequency of 0.65% (sample size 1718). Since 2002, fishing for yelloweye rockfish is prohibited and thus no frequency data are available since 2002 from the recreational fishery.

The decadal trends along with 95% confidence intervals for the data with sample sizes are shown in Figure 30. Note the early data do not report sample size (number of individuals identified) thus the uncertainty in the early estimates cannot be calculated. Species misidentification should not be a problem for yelloweye rockfish, but their frequency may be affected by non-random reporting in the 1960s and early 1970s. The tables from Buckley and Bargmann (1965-1973) suggest that only a few (2-3) common species were being recorded in some punch card areas.

As expected, yelloweye rockfish have been observed infrequently in the WDFW fisheries independent trawl surveys (Table 16) in Puget Sound Proper, and in north Puget Sound, yelloweye rockfish were not observed in the WDFW trawl survey in 1987, 1989, 1991, or 2001, but were caught in 2004 (0.65% of the catch). In the REEF scuba survey data, yelloweye rockfish have been sighted consistently throughout the Puget Sound (north and south) since 2001 at an average frequency of 0.5% of dives in the south reporting a sighting of yelloweye rockfish and 2% of dives in the north reporting a

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sighting. There is no evidence of a decline in the probability of sightings during dives (Table 19).

In the Strait of Georgia, yelloweye rockfish are common in the recent recreational catches; the proportion of yelloweye rockfish in the 2006 and 2005 recreational catch (DFO Canada catch data) was 17.1% and 7.5%, respectively. The high frequency of yelloweye rockfish in the recreational catch may reflect targeting for this species, as yelloweye rockfish are small proportion of the rockfish observed in the few fisheries independent surveys that are available. A genetic tagging study in 2003 (Yamanaka et al., 2004), where data were collected from tissue taken from hooks, 1% of samples were yelloweye rockfish. In a 2003 pilot camera study designed to estimate rockfish biomass, (see specifically Table 10 in Yamanaka et al. (2004)), 439 rockfish were observed of which 1 (0.2%) was a yelloweye rockfish. Another ROV survey in 2004 in the southern Strait of Georgia, identified 105 rockfish species of which 5 (4.8%) were yelloweye rockfish.

There appears to be limited information on population trends yelloweye rockfish in the Strait of Georgia. Data from the recreational creel survey conducted by Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada is of limited value because species composition information and groundfish-targeted effort is lacking; salmon-targeted and groundfish-targets trips are reported together. Submersible surveys were conducted in 1984 and 2003 in statistical areas 12 and 13 in the Strait of Georgia (Yamanaka et al. 2004). Between the two surveys, there was a decline in the mean number of yelloweye rockfish per transect (8.57 to 4.65) but the difference was not statistically significant. Trend data are also available from the commercial long-line fishery (Yamanaka et al. 2004). These data show generally declining trends in CPUE from the late 1980s through the 1990s, but interpretation is difficult given the effects of market forces and management regulations on commercial fisheries.

### **Greenstriped rockfish**

Greenstriped rockfish do not occur in the recreational catch data from North Puget Sound and occur very infrequently in the Puget Sound Proper recreational catch data and the WDFW trawl survey (greenstriped occurred in 143 of 1555 (9%) total hauls of the WDFW trawl survey, across all years and regions). In the mid-1960s to mid-1970s data (Buckley 1967, 1968, 1970; Bargmann 1977), greenstriped rockfish appear much less frequently than in the mid-1970s to mid-1980s (Figure 31 and Figure 32). This suggests that greenstriped rockfish were not being consistently recorded during dockside identifications during the 1960/1970s. From 1975 to 1980 (WDF 1975-86), greenstriped rockfish were recorded at a 1-2% frequency in Puget Sound Proper (Figure 31, Table 20 (PSP) and Table 21 (NPS)). After 1980, the frequency of greenstriped rockfish declined in the recreational data and since 1996 it very rarely appears in the recreational catch data. Bag limits were imposed in 1983 and the bag limit was further reduced in 1994 and 2000. Since greenstriped rockfish are smaller than other species, the bag limit may lead to discarding and thus under-representation of greenstriped rockfish in the recreational catch. Greenstriped rockfish appear in a low frequency in the WDFW fisheries independent trawl survey (Table 20), and they were caught in the most recent years of the WDFW trawl survey in Puget Sound Proper (in both 2002 and 2005). However the high variance in the data makes detecting any patterns difficult. Simple ANOVA models with

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Region (Hood Canal, Central Sound, South Sound, Whidbey Island), Depth (four depth zones) and Year as categorical, fixed variables did not detect differences among years for greenstriped rockfish ( $x'=\ln(x+1)$ ,  $F_{7, 561} = 0.24$ ,  $p = 0.97$ ). Thus although greenstriped rockfish have been almost entirely absent from the recreational catch from 1999-2007, they are still present in Puget Sound Proper.

Greenstriped rockfish also do not appear in the 2006 and 2005 species composition data from the recreational catch in the Strait of Georgia (DFO Canada creel survey data). However they have appeared in other fishery-independent surveys such as long-line, jig and ROV surveys (see specifically Table 4 in Yamanaka et al. (2004)). In statistical area 13, they were 1.5% of the rockfish caught in a long-line survey (Lohead and Yamanaka, 2007). In the 2005 ROV survey in southern Strait of Georgia (Martin et al. 2006), they comprised 50% of the rockfish observed (52 out of 105 rockfish identified to species). This appears to be an unusual occurrence as they are not reported at such high frequencies in other surveys.

### **Redstripe rockfish**

Redstripe rockfish do not occur in the catch data from North Puget Sound. In Puget Sound Proper, however, redstripe rockfish appeared frequently in the recreational catch (between 1-14%) during 1980 to 1985 (Figure 33 and Figure 34, Table 22). Previous to that, from 1965 to 1979, redstripe rockfish appeared much less frequently (< 1%) (See Buckley and Bargmann references and Washington State Sport Catch Reports). It is not known if redstripe rockfish were being consistently recorded during dockside identifications in the 1960/1970s, but its absence suggests that it may not have been. After 1985, the frequency of redstripe rockfish declined in the recreational data and since 1996, it does not appear in the catch data. A bag limit was imposed in 1983 and the bag limit was further reduced in 1994 and 2000. Since redstripe rockfish are smaller than other species, bag limits may lead to discarding and thus under-representation of redstripe rockfish in the recreational catch. In the 1980s and 1990s, redstripe rockfish appeared at a low frequency (< 1.5%) in the WDFW trawl survey (Table 23), however in 2002 and 2005, redstripe rockfish comprised 39 and 48% of the individuals caught, respectively. Examination of the individual trawl samples however indicates that this was caused by outlier trawl samples in each of those years and which suggests that these high estimates are not indicative of an actual increase in abundance in recent years. However, an ANOVA model with Region (Hood Canal, Central Sound, South Sound, Whidbey Island), Depth (four depth zones) and Year as categorical, fixed variables did detect interannual variability in redstripe rockfish ( $x'=\ln(x+1)$ ,  $F_{7, 651} = 2.30$ ,  $p = 0.026$ ). Biomass of redstripe rockfish in the trawls was  $0.28 \text{ kg ha}^{-1}$  ( $\pm 0.089 \text{ s.e.}$ ) lower in 1995 than in 2008 (Tukey-Kramer test,  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating a potential increase in abundance. Importantly, the presence of redstripe rockfish in the WDFW trawl survey indicates that redstripe rockfish are present in Puget Sound but are no longer being recorded in the dockside surveys of the recreational catch, for undetermined reasons.

Redstripe rockfish do appear in the 2006 and 2005 species composition data from DFO Canada for the Strait of Georgia statistical areas 13-20, 28-29. They comprised 0.08% and 0.1% of the rockfish catch, respectively. They have appeared in other fishery-independent surveys such as charter and jig surveys (see specifically Table 4 in Yamanaka et al. (2004)) although these surveys included area 12 and it is unclear if

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redstripe rockfish were collected farther south. Redstripe rockfish did not appear in the 2004 long-line survey of statistical area 13 (only in area 12) (Lochead and Yamanaka 2007). Two redstripe rockfish (out of 105 rockfish recorded to species) were reported in a 2005 ROV survey in southern Strait of Georgia (Martin et al. 2006).

### **Absolute Abundance Estimates**

Because of a lack of systematic sampling targeting rare rockfishes, absolute estimates of population size of the petitioned species cannot be generated with any accuracy. However, a rough estimate of the order of magnitude of population size can be determined from information assembled by WDFW. Palsson et al. (2008) extrapolated results from a video survey to estimate the population size of the major rockfish species (copper rockfish, quillback rockfish, black rockfish and brown rockfish) in Puget Sound Proper as about 40,683 and in Northern Puget Sound as 838, 944. When we apply the percent frequency of the petitioned species in the recreational catch to these numbers, it is clear the population sizes of the rarer species are quite small – probably <10,000 in Georgia Basin and <1000 in Puget Sound Proper.

## ***Estimates of rockfish trends in Puget Sound***

### **Synopsis of the trend analysis**

A trend analysis based on time series analysis of count data was performed on the data for “total rockfish” in the different DPSs for Puget Sound rockfish. This type of analysis is standard for population time-series data (Dennis et al. 1991), however, the analysis used recent advances to deal with observation error in the data (Holmes 2001; Lindley 2003; Holmes and Fagan 2002; Holmes et al. 2007; Dennis et al. 2006) and to combine multiple time series for a single population. These analyses were used to estimate the trend parameter (mean annual population growth rate) and the 2 variance parameters (process and observation variance) which govern forecasts of future trends.

It is important to realize that the common species (copper rockfish, quillback rockfish, brown rockfish, and black rockfish) form ca. 90% of the “total rockfish” in the different data sources used in the trend analysis. The goal of the trend analysis is to determine the 1965-2008 trend in “total rockfish” (i.e., what the actual population rate of decline has been from 1965-2008). This analysis does not make any assumptions about the composition of “total rockfish”; it is known that the frequency of the common species relative to each other has changed. The estimated trend for “total rockfish” is used to make inferences about the petitioned species by looking for evidence that the frequency of the petitioned species has increased (or decreased) in the “total rockfish” assemblage. If the frequency of a petitioned species has remained constant, it can be inferred that the petitioned species has shown a similar trend to the “total rockfish” trend.

Quantitative estimates for the individual five species in the current petition are not generated because the low sampling of the catches in many years, particularly early years, provides insufficient yearly estimates for the petitioned species. Instead the BRT was forced to use data on total rockfish trends and trends in the species composition of



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the total rockfish assemblage. We recognize that the trend in total rockfish does not equal the trend in the petitioned species. However, this does not mean the BRT lacked information on trends in the petitioned species. Using the trend analysis in combination with the species frequency analysis described above allowed the BRT to

- 1) Evaluate the trend in total rockfish abundance using all available data and multiple ways of looking at the data.
- 2) Evaluate the evidence that the prevalence of each petitioned species has been increasing in abundance relative to the total. That is, that the ratio of the abundance of the petitioned species to the total rockfish abundance has been increasing.

More formally,

$$N_{\text{petitioned}}(t) = (N_{\text{petitioned}}(t) / N_{\text{total}}(t)) * N_{\text{total}}(t)$$

Thus,

If  $N_{\text{petitioned}}(t) / N_{\text{total}}(t)$  is constant, then the trend in  $N_{\text{total}} =$  the trend in  $N_{\text{petitioned}}$ .

If  $N_{\text{petitioned}}(t) / N_{\text{total}}(t)$  has been going down, then the petitioned species is going down faster than the total.

If  $N_{\text{petitioned}}(t) / N_{\text{total}}(t)$  has been going up, then the petitioned species is not going down as fast as the total.

### **Problems with analyzing composite and CPUE data**

The “total rockfish” time series is a composite of multiple species, and it is well-known that making inferences about individual species from composite catch per unit effort data is problematic. The main problems can be summarized as 1) The trend in the total catch will be dominated by the most abundant species, and the signal from infrequent species is lost, 2) Catch-per-unit effort data from fisheries are strongly influenced by targeting and by changes in the efficiency of gear and fish-locating technology. Switching of the targeted species occurs as one species declines, and this means that the trends in “multispecies” catch-per-unit data may have little relation to the individual species, and 3) Changes in management will change, sometimes dramatically, the targeting for a group (such as rockfish) and discarding of individual species. This means that “Total rockfish” CPUE may not be actually measuring rockfish abundance (if targeting changes) and the actual trends are masked (if discarding is occurring). The following approaches were used to limit these recognized problems.

**To address problem 2**, CPUE data from the commercial bottom-trawl (1965-1980) were not used. These were the only commercial data with good effort data (hours trawled), but it is known that there were many changes in gear that were leading to increases in the catch-per-hour trawled. Also rockfish catch in commercial data is highly susceptible to changes in which species are targeted (and whether rockfish are targeted) and to discarding. The data from the recreational fishery (since it is not driven by seafood

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market forces) is assumed to be less susceptible to these factors. Also the spatial scale at which the recreational fishery has been monitored is much finer than the commercial fishery, and this helps us determine if there have been targeting changes.

To address problem 3, the recreational data were split into time periods with constant bag limits and the trend line was fit to each segment separately. The slope of the trend line is forced to be equal between segments, but the intercept is allowed to change. This means that if the catch-per-trip drops after the bag limit is changed, that bag-limit induced drop does not influence the estimated trend.

Problem 1 cannot be addressed by changes in the analysis (or data used). It should be kept in mind that the estimated trends are the trends for the most common species, not the petitioned species. Because of the nature of the available data, the BRT was forced to use the overall trend in rockfish (heavily influenced by common species) to make inferences about the magnitude of trend in the petitioned species by looking for changes in the frequency of the petitioned species relative to the common species. Thus, evidence for changes in the frequency of the petitioned species in the recreational catch, WDFW trawl surveys and REEF dive surveys was examined. If the petitioned species are not declining as fast as the “total rockfish” time series, then their frequency should be increasing relative to other more common species. They should become less frequent if they are instead declining faster. A problem with this approach is that many of the petitioned species occur at frequencies of 0.5-3% of the catch. Sample sizes for the species identifications have been too small to detect even a 4-fold increase in frequency from, say, from 1 to 4%. A second concern is that greenstriped rockfish and redstripe rockfish may be especially susceptible to being discarded when bag limits are low, and that the WDFW trawl estimates for this species have been strongly influenced by sample size and outlier events. More fishery independent surveys focused on rockfish in Puget Sound are needed.

## **Methods**

### **Summary of the methods**

The basic concept involves using a maximum likelihood approach to fit a trend model with one underlying population process (total rockfish) simultaneously to different data sources. The different data sources are assumed to be measuring the same population process, but in different ways. Their observation variances can be different and how they scale relative to the total population can be different. The main analysis uses only one type of data (recreational catch data) and we assume that these data are measuring the same segment of the population. The secondary analysis uses the WDFW trawl data and the REEF dive surveys. For this analysis, it is allowed that these data sources might be sampling a different segment of the population (e.g. different age/size segment or a different region of Puget Sound) and that the trend in a specific time period might be different among data sources that survey different segments of the population. However, the long-term trends should still be the same.

The different data sources that were used depended on which analysis was being done. The data sources can be summarized as a) rockfish per angler trip data for different time periods with different bag limits within one DPS, b) rockfish per angler trip data for

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different time periods with different bag limits within multiple DPSs, and c) rockfish per angler trip data plus WDFW trawl data, and REEF dive data.

### The model

To characterize population growth, a discrete-time Gompertz model (Reddingius 1971) is used to model density-dependent population dynamics. This model can approximate most common types of density-dependence (Ives et al. 2003). The stochastic Gompertz equation written in log-space is

$$X_t = a + bX_{t-1} + E_t \quad (1)$$

where  $X_t$  is the log population density (or density index such as CPUE) of the population at time step  $t$ ,  $a$  is the intrinsic rate of increase, and  $b$  represents the strength of density dependence.  $a$  and  $b$  are assumed to be shared since all time series are assumed to be measuring the same population process (just with different errors and scalings).  $E_t$ , termed the process error, represents the random deviations in population change from time step to time step.  $E$  represents the real deviations in population change which are not equal to the observed deviations since the observed deviations also have observation error added. Because population change is a multiplicative process, it is additive in log space. Additive stochastic processes lead to normal errors. Thus,  $E$  is a random normal variate with a mean of zero and variance  $\sigma^2$ . Equation 1 is a univariate auto-regressive, first order, or AR(1), process.

The true population process exists but cannot be seen; instead, it is observed, and these observations are governed by an observation process. We can write a general observation process for a AR(1) process as

$$\mathbf{Y}_t = \mathbf{D} + X_t + \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}_t \quad (2)$$

where  $\mathbf{Y}_t$  is an  $n \times 1$  vector of the  $n$  observed time series (Hinrichsen and Holmes 2009), each of which is observing with different observation variance and scaling the underlying population process.  $\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}_t$  is an  $n \times 1$  vector representing the observation errors, which have some statistical distribution with a mean of 0 and an  $n \times n$  covariance matrix  $\mathbf{R}$ . The  $n \times 1$  vector  $\mathbf{D}$  represents bias in observation errors, and the off-diagonal elements of  $\mathbf{R}$  represent the spatial correlation between the observation errors for the  $n$  observed time series.  $\mathbf{D}$  allows us to model differences in observability (or catchability) of different data sources (i.e. gear types or fisheries). For our analysis, we assume that the errors across the different data sources have independent and unique variances and biases; thus the  $\mathbf{R}$  and  $\mathbf{D}$  matrices are:

$$\mathbf{R} = \begin{bmatrix} \eta_1^2 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & \eta_2^2 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & \dots & \eta_n^2 \end{bmatrix} \quad \mathbf{D} = \begin{bmatrix} d_1 \\ d_2 \\ \vdots \\ d_n \end{bmatrix}$$

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## Model fitting and parameter estimation

Equations 1 and 2 together form a state-space model for the observations of the stochastic “total rockfish” process. “State-space” is a statistical term referring to a model with an unseen state process (in our case, the state process is the population process) combined with an observation process. It is a standard term in time-series analysis for the type of AR(1) model that is being used and has a long history within the field of time-series analysis.

Given time series of “total rockfish” abundance indices ( $\mathbf{Y}_1, \mathbf{Y}_2, \dots, \mathbf{Y}_T$ ) from a set of  $n$  data sources, the goal is to estimate the trend parameter  $a$  and process variance  $\sigma^2$  that describe the total rockfish dynamics. We use the traditional maximum-likelihood estimation method for this type of state-space model: a Kalman filtering approach combined with an Expectation-Maximization Algorithm (Shumway and Stoffer 2006).

### How is this different than just fitting a line through the log data?

Fitting a line through the data means that one is using a model with observation error only, whereas our models have both process and observation error. Observation error only models give estimates of What happened? Process plus observation error models give estimates of the underlying population dynamics (the process variance) and are used to forecast What will happen? (if the past dynamics continue). Both types of models are used by population analysts and the choice depends on the purpose of the analysis. Models with process variance are also used to ask: could these data have been produced by a population with a different underlying trend. (i.e., did the population increase just by a few chance good years, when it normally would be declining?).

It is important to recognize however that the trend estimates will be the same for both models. What changes are the variance estimates and thus the estimates of confidence intervals on the trend estimate. In particular, the confidence intervals become wider when process variance is included. The estimates of the future population size will also be very different – the median future population size will be the same but the variance of the projections will be very different. The variance is zero for the observation error only model and is process variance  $\times$  forecast length for the model with both variance sources.

## Data used for trend analyses

The data used for each analysis are shown in Figure 35 and Figure 36. The different analyses were

**PSP-R** Puget Sound Proper using only the recreational fish per angler trip for bottomfish-specific trips

**PS-R** Puget Sound (Puget Sound Proper plus north Puget Sound including the Strait of Juan de Fuca) using only the recreational fish per angler trip for bottomfish-specific trips

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**PSP-RT** Puget Sound Proper using the recreational fish per angler trip for bottomfish-specific trips and the WDFW trawl data from Puget Sound Proper (south Puget Sound)

**PS-RTS** Puget Sound (Puget Sound Proper plus north Puget Sound including the Strait of Juan de Fuca) using the recreational fish per angler trip for bottomfish-specific trips, the WDFW trawl survey for Puget Sound Proper and north Puget Sound, and the REEF diver survey data for all of Puget Sound.

Note that when data from different survey types are combined the multivariate AR(1) model is used to allow different data sources to be monitoring a different segment (age/size or region) of the population. Data that are treated as monitoring the same segment of the population have the same color. The numbering shows which data are allowed to have different biases relative to the population. This allows for example, the data from the 1-bag limit period to have a lower scaling relative to the population. It has a lower scaling because the maximum fish per trip has been capped (by the bag limit) at 1.

### ***Long-term mean population growth estimates***

Estimates of the trend in the total population of rockfish in Puget Sound were approximately -3% per year, although this figure varied depending on what assumptions were included in the model estimating the trend (Figure 35). This rate of annual decline corresponds to an average decline of about 70% over the 1965-2007 time period the BRT examined. Since the frequency of the petitioned species declined in frequency, the BRT concluded that the decline of the petitioned species must have been greater than the 70% observed in the total rockfish. Figure 37 shows the estimates of the long-term mean population growth rate (1965-2007) by regions. Estimates are shown for different assumptions about the underlying structure of the population and the data from different gear types.

The assumption of one population trajectory means that there is one population process and all the data sources are sampling that same process. Their estimates will be different because of different data sources have different levels of observation error and are scaled differently relative to the population abundance. The latter means that '(fish per angler trip in north Puget Sound) =  $x \times$  abundance' while 'scuba sightings per dive in south Puget Sound =  $y \times$  abundance' and  $x \neq y$ .

For the 'All Puget Sound' analysis, the assumption of one population trajectory means that the most common rockfish in Puget Sound are mixed sufficiently to cause mixing throughout Puget Sound, and as such data collected in the north and south Puget Sound should be highly correlated. This assumption is unsupported by the data as evidenced by the different trends in the north and south (the upper and middle panels), and by the separation of North and South Puget Sound into separate DPS's for copper rockfish and quillback rockfish. These estimates are shown by the black symbols in the lower panel. They are plotted for completeness, but little weight should be given to these estimates.

For a single region, north or south Puget Sound, the assumption of one population trajectory means that the gears are sampling the same population process. This is a poor

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assumption if different gears are sampling different segments of the population (age/size) or very different segments of the rockfish community, AND these segments are behaving differently (different trends). It is likely that the hook and line recreational data, WDFW bottom trawls and REEF dive data are sampling different population segments and different segments of the rockfish community; however, it is unclear whether the additional model complexity from assuming separate population processes for each data source is warranted given the limited data from the WDFW trawl survey and the REEF surveys.

The recreational data since 2000 is from a fishery with a 1 bag limit on rockfish. In addition to the 1 bag limit, other regulations have been added incrementally: restriction of the season and rules against discarding undesirable rockfish. After the 1 bag limit was imposed, the trend in the rockfish per angler trip decreased from increasing to flat in the north and from flat to decreasing in the south. Arguments can be made that these data should be excluded from the analysis. The estimates marked with B show the effect of excluding these data from the analysis. As would be expected, the trend estimates increase.

Lastly, estimates were run with and without the WDFW trawl survey data and the REEF dive survey data in order to show how the estimates change with the inclusion of other data sources. However, there is not reason to believe these data are uninformative or invalid thus they should be included in the analysis. If it is believed they are sampling substantially different segments of the rockfish community then they can be included using the ‘Gears are independent’ assumption (red symbols).

Formal model selection approaches will not be helpful in resolving which assumptions are best because they cannot give information on whether the 1 bag limit data, trawl data or REEF data should be excluded. Model selection can be used to look at the support for using one population process versus different processes for regions and gears. This type of analysis was used to make an argument against the one population process assumption for the ‘All Puget Sound’ analysis.

### **Estimated model fits**

Figure 38 and Figure 39 show the estimated trajectories with the rescaled data. When there are multiple data sources for a single population trajectory, the model estimates the best scaling (i.e. how to move the data up or down on the y-axis) to fit a shared population trajectory. In particular, note that the recreational data with different bag limits are assumed to measure the same population trajectory, but have a different scaling.

The BRT confronted a number of issues pertaining to the species composition data. The issues and how they were handled are detailed in Appendix D.

### ***Size Data for Each DPS***

The BRT examined length-frequency data for two general reasons. Size data provides some insight about the degree to which populations of the petitioned species were the result of rare (even single) recruitment events versus multiple, less episodic

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events. The former may indicate that Puget Sound represents a sink population that is part of a larger DPS, while the latter is more suggestive of a self sustaining population. Secondly, length-frequency data provides information about the degree to which large size classes have been removed from the populations.

The BRT analyzed size data available from recreationally caught fish archived in data files obtained from WDFW. Data were combined from three data files provided by Wayne Palsson in July, 2008. Data were restricted to fish caught inside the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the Georgia Basin, or Puget Sound proper (punch card areas 5-13). Fish potentially caught on the coast (punch card areas 1-4) were excluded.

Size data were also available from WDFW trawl surveys conducted from 1987 to 2008. Of the five petitioned species, only redstripe rockfish (n=3) were caught in the 1980s, canary rockfish were only caught in 2007, and bocaccio were never caught. In addition, there was a clear difference in gear selectivity between the recreational data and the trawl data, with smaller fish more common in trawls. Due to this limited applicability for examining temporal trends, we excluded trawl data from the comparisons.

Size data (presumed to be fork length for all individuals) was binned by 5 cm size classes, then plotted by species for each decade. An arbitrary cutoff size at which about 30% of the fish were larger than the rest of the sample in the 1970s (the earliest available decade for size records) was plotted for comparison with subsequent decades. Although populations in the 1970s probably did not comprise unfished size structures, they were used as baseline for examining the availability of older fish. The 30% cutoff simply provided a metric for comparison, with healthy populations expected to include a diverse age/size structure comparable to the unfished population. Because these data were primarily derived by opportunistic creel censuses and not by a systematic sampling program, there are potential biases for many aspects. Sampling effort was not evenly distributed across time or spatial areas. Thus, the size-frequency histograms presented here can only serve as a general indication of trends over time, with the assumption that the examined fish were representative of size distributions within the DPS as a whole.

Bocaccio - Size-frequency distributions for bocaccio in the 1970s indicate a wide range of sizes (Figure 14), with recreationally caught individuals from 25 to 85 cm. Although the distribution is clearly bimodal, some individuals in every 5 cm class are represented. This broad size distribution suggests a spread of ages, with some successful recruitment over multiple years. A similar range of sizes is also evident in the 1980s. These patterns are more likely to result from a self-sustaining population within the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin DPS rather than sporadic immigration from coastal populations. The temporal trend in size distributions for bocaccio also suggests size truncation of the population, with larger fish becoming less common over time. By the decade of the 2000s, no bocaccio data were available, so we were not able to determine if the size truncation continued in this decade.

Canary - Canary rockfish exhibited a similar broad spread of sizes in the 1970s (Figure 14). However, by the 2000s, there were far fewer size classes represented and no fish > 55 cm were recorded in the recreational data. Although some of this truncation may be a function of the overall lower number of sampled fish, the data in general suggest few older fish remain in the population.

Yelloweye - Recreationally caught yelloweye rockfish in the 1970s spanned a broad range of sizes (Figure 14). By the decade of the 2000s, there was some evidence of

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fewer older fish in the population. However, overall numbers of fish in the database were also much lower, making it difficult to determine if clear size truncation occurred.

Greenstriped - Greenstriped rockfish have a relatively small maximum size. Although common in the recreational catch data for the 1970s and 1980s, they are represented by few individuals in the 1990s and 2000s. Size distributions do not suggest any size truncation over this time period. Low numbers in the catch may be a function of decreasing bag limits over time, and the likelihood of discarding of this less desired species by recreational fishermen.

Redstripe - Similar to greenstriped, redstripe rockfish have a small maximum size and are less desirable to recreational fishermen. Large numbers of redstripe were retained by fishermen in the 1980s, but very few were available in the database for the 1990s and 2000s. There was no evidence of size truncation in this species over time, but too few fish were measured in the later decades to provide a meaningful analysis.

Although the recreational fisheries data have sampling limitations and inherent biases, they are the only source of information available for 'historic' size distributions of the petitioned species. Fisheries impacts were likely occurring before the 1970s, when the available data series begins. The suggestion of size truncation in bocaccio, canary rockfish, and yelloweye rockfish is likely conservative. As bag limits were reduced from 15 to 10 (North Sound) and 5 (South Sound) in 1983, to 5 (North Sound) and 3 (South Sound) in 1994, and to 1 in both North and South Sound in 2000, fishermen would be expected to select for larger fish and high-grading was likely. Thus, if larger fish were available in the population at comparable proportions to the 1970s, the recreational catch might be expected to exhibit larger rather than smaller fish. For these three species, we discuss below (threats) how the reduced proportion of older fish in the population limits reproduction to smaller, younger females, potentially leading to a host of associated maternal effects, such as reduced relative fecundity, reduced temporal span in parturition timing, and possible reduced larval quality. The absence of older fish may, therefore, decrease the resilience of the population and increase recovery time.

### ***Threats Assessment for Petitioned Species of Rockfish***

Rockfish populations in Puget Sound are potentially threatened by a number of factors that increase mortality, reduce productivity, degrade or destroy habitat, reduce water quality or alter ecological interactions. The BRT was asked to perform a quantitative threats assessment for each DPS, by scoring the severity of current threats to the 5 rockfish DPS's (Table 25). Severity of threat scores was defined as: 1 – very low, 2 – low, 3 – moderate, 4 – high, and 5 – very high. Insufficient data to score the threat severity were indicated by “u” for unknown. Threats that are not applicable to the area were indicated by “n/a”. Threats were arranged within the four statutory listing factors: 1) the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range; 2) over utilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes; 3) disease or predation; and 4) other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.



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The BRT created a list of the potential threats to bocaccio, canary rockfish, greenstriped rockfish, redstripe rockfish and yelloweye rockfish in Puget Sound. Risks to marine life in Puget Sound have been documented repeatedly and in detail (e.g. Snover et al. 2005, Ruckelshaus and McClure 2007, Team 2007, Palsson et al. 2008), and we refer readers to these documents for a more thorough description of these threats. Following this summary of threats, the BRT reported the results of the BRT analysis of the severity of threats to each of the petitioned species DPS.

### **Overutilization**

Elsewhere in this report, the BRT considers the history of fisheries and fishery removals in Puget Sound (Appendix A). There is little doubt that overfishing played a major role in the declines of rockfish in Puget Sound (Palsson et al. 2008). For example, comparison of rockfish densities and sizes in no-take marine protected areas to fished areas shows that the increased fishing mortality experienced by fish outside of marine protected areas results in lower abundance and smaller-sized fish outside versus inside marine protected areas (Palsson et al. 2008). While fishery regulations are markedly different now than they were historically, the effects of fishing are long-lasting and may constitute an ongoing threat. In particular, fishing can have dramatic impacts on the size or age structure of the population, with effects that can influence ongoing productivity. Notably, when size and age of females declines, this negatively impacts reproductive success. The BRT considered the evidence for maternal effects on reproductive success, as well as the possibility that such effects occur in the petitioned species.

Maternal effects on reproductive success can influence the fundamental assumptions underlying stock assessment and associated fisheries management models. Put simply, the basic assumption is that all females, after adjusting for difference in biomass, are equivalent in their likelihood of producing surviving progeny. Metrics of spawning stock biomass (SSB, the weight of all mature females) or lifetime egg production (LEP, expected number of total eggs produced after incorporating adult mortality schedules) are used to estimate how many of the population's females can be removed without severely reducing the stock's reproductive capacity. Under this basic assumption, the number of progeny produced per unit weight of female biomass is constant, the seasonal timing of spawning is equivalent for all females, and all eggs or larvae have a similar likelihood of survival. Recent studies of several teleosts, including rockfishes, indicate that all of these traits can vary with female age or size. Because even minor levels of fishing can remove a disproportionate number of older or larger fish, violation of the basic assumption of reproductive equivalence can result in overestimates of the capacity of a stock to maintain a desired level of abundance.

Maternal effects in rockfishes are evident in all of the traits noted above. Larger or older females have a higher weight-specific fecundity (number of larvae per g of female weight) in black rockfish (Bobko and Berkeley 2004), blue rockfish, yellowtail rockfish (Sogard et al. 2008), widow rockfish (Boehlert et al. 1982) and chilipepper rockfish (Sogard unpubl. data). A particularly striking and consistent maternal effect in rockfishes relates to the timing of parturition. Because most rockfish females release larvae on only one day each year (with a few exceptions in southern populations), the timing of parturition can be crucial in terms of matching favorable oceanographic conditions for larvae. Larger or older females release larvae earlier in the season

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compared to smaller or younger females in black rockfish, blue rockfish, yellowtail rockfish, kelp rockfish, and darkblotched rockfish (Sogard et al. 2008, Nichol and Pikitch 1994). Maternal effects on larval quality have been documented for black rockfish, blue rockfish, gopher rockfish, and yellowtail rockfish (Berkeley et al. 2004, Sogard et al. 2008). The mechanism across species is the size of the oil globule at parturition, which provides the developing larva with energy insurance against the risks of starvation (Berkeley et al. 2004, Fisher et al. 2007), and in black rockfish enhances early growth rates (Berkeley et al. 2004). An additional maternal effect in black rockfish indicates that older females are more successful in completing recruitment of progeny from primary oocyte to fully developed larva (Bobko and Berkeley 2004). This effect is relevant to estimates of fecundity, since estimates of pre-fertilized eggs will provide a valid estimate of the final batch of released larvae for older females but will greatly overestimate the final fecundity of younger females.

Although the maternal traits examined thus far in rockfishes have been consistent in direction, with older/larger females producing proportionately greater numbers of larvae, producing higher quality larvae, and releasing them earlier in the season than younger/smaller females, not all rockfishes examined have exhibited maternal effects in all traits examined. For the species examined by Sogard et al. (2008), maternal effects were stronger in winter spawning species of the subgenus *Sebastes* than in spring spawning species of the subgenus *Pteropodus*. There have been no direct studies of maternal effects for any of the *Sebastes* species listed in the current petition. The five species belong to five different subgenera, with bocaccio in *Sebastes*, canary rockfish in *Rosicola*, yelloweye rockfish in *Sebastes*, greenstriped rockfish in *Hispanicus*, and redstripe rockfish in *Allosebastes* (see specifically Table 1 in Li et al. (2007)). Spawning appears to occur primarily in winter for bocaccio and canary rockfish, in spring for redstripe rockfish, and across a broad span of months from winter to summer in yelloweye and greenstriped rockfish (Love et al. 2002). Predicting the form or strength of maternal effects based on phylogenetic relationships or timing of spawning is thus difficult for these five species. However, the generality of maternal effects in *Sebastes* suggests that some level of age or size influence on reproduction is likely.

Exploited species typically exhibit a reduction in the proportion of older and larger fish in the fished population. This age truncation effect has been widely demonstrated for *Sebastes* populations all along the west coast (Mason 1998, Harvey et al. 2006), even for species not currently categorized as overfished by the Pacific Fishery Management Council. Over time, removal of older fish leads to a shift to earlier ages/sizes at maturation. This effect may be a result of phenotypic plasticity and therefore reversible if exploitation is reduced, but there is some evidence of evolutionary selection toward younger ages at maturity (Law 2007). Under either scenario, age truncation leads to increased dependence on younger females for reproduction. Shifts in the age of maturity have not been examined in rockfishes. The importance of the maternal effect on larval quality to population productivity depends greatly on the maturity schedule (O'Farrell and Botsford 2006).

In a broad span of species, there is evidence that age or size truncation is associated with increased variability in recruitment, e.g. Icelandic cod (Marteinsdottir & Thorarinsson 1998, striped bass (Secor 2000), Baltic cod (Wieland et al. 2000), and a broad suite of California Current species (Hsieh et al. 2006). For long-lived species,

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reproduction over a span of many years is considered a bet-hedging strategy that has a buffering effect at the population level, increasing the likelihood of some successful reproduction over a period of variable environmental conditions (Longhurst 2002). When reproductive effort is limited to younger ages, this buffering capacity is lost and populations more closely follow short term fluctuations in the environment (Hsieh 2006).

The importance of maternal effects on extinction risk in rockfishes will depend on how severely the population's size and age structure has been truncated. Risk will increase as the proportion of reproduction contributed solely by younger females increases.

## **Habitat Destruction and Modification**

### **Physical Habitat**

As presented earlier, adult bocaccio, canary rockfish and yelloweye rockfish are typically associated with rocky habitats. Palsson et al. (2008) report that such habitat is extremely limited in Puget Sound, with only 10 km<sup>2</sup> of such habitat in Puget Sound Proper (i.e., south of Admiralty Inlet), and 207 km<sup>2</sup> in Northern Puget Sound. Palsson et al. note that this habitat can be degraded by construction of bridges, sewer lines and other structures, deployment of cables and pipelines, and by burying from dredge spoils and natural sub tidal slope failures.

### **Biogenic Habitat**

The human population in the greater Puget Sound region has increased rapidly over the last two decades. In 2005, the Puget Sound Basin housed approximately 4.4 million people, a 25% increase from 1991. Although estimates vary depending on the area encompassed, according to the State Office of Management, the population is expected to grow to 4.7 - 6.1 million residents by 2025 (Sound Science 2007). Freshwater, marine, nearshore and upland habitats throughout the greater Puget Sound region have been affected by a variety of human activities, including agriculture, heavy industry, timber harvest, and the development of sea ports and residential property. The extent of some of these habitats has markedly declined over the last century. Hutchinson (1988) indicated that overall losses since European settlement, by area, of intertidal habitat were 58% for greater Puget Sound and 18% for the Strait of Georgia. Four river deltas (the Duwamish, Lummi, Puyallup, and Samish) have lost greater than 92% of their intertidal marshes (Simenstad et al. 1982, Schmitt et al. 1994). At least 76% of the wetlands around greater Puget Sound have been eliminated, especially in urbanized estuaries. Substantial declines of mudflats and sand flats have also occurred in the deltas of these estuaries (Levings and Thom 1994).

More recent estimates suggest more than 80% of all tidal wetlands have been converted to human dominated land uses (Collins and Sheikh 2005). Furthermore, approximately 30% of the Puget Sound shoreline has been modified by humans, most intensely in heavily populated regions. Nearly 52% of the central Puget Sound and about

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35% of the shorelines of Whidbey Island, Hood Canal and South Puget Sound have been modified (Nearshore Habitat Program 2001).

Eelgrass, kelp and other submerged vegetation may provide important rockfish habitat, particularly for juveniles (Love et al. 1991). In 2006, there were about 20,234 hectares of eelgrass in Puget Sound, with about 1/3 of this in Padilla and Samish bays. Monitoring of eelgrass began in 2000, and although coverage declined until 2004, since that time it has remained unchanged over all Puget Sound. However, localized declines have occurred, with local losses in Hood Canal ranging from 1-22 percent per year (Team 2007). Kelp cover is highly variable and has shown long term declines in some regions, while kelp beds have increased in areas where artificial substrate provides additional kelp habitat (Palsson et al. 2008).

Non-indigenous species are an emerging threat to biogenic habitat in Puget Sound. *Sargassum muticum* is an introduced brown alga that is now common throughout much of the Sound. The degree to which *Sargassum* influences native macroalgae, eel grass or rockfish themselves is not presently understood. Several species of non-indigenous tunicates have been identified in Puget Sound. For example, *Ciona savignyo* was initially seen in one location in 2004, but within 2 years spread to 86% of sites surveyed in Hood Canal (Team 2007). The exact impact of invasive tunicates on rockfish or their habitats is unknown, but results in other regions (e.g. Levin et al. 2002) suggest the potential for introduced invertebrates to have widespread impacts on rocky-reef fish populations.

## Water Quality

Over the last century, human activities have introduced a variety of toxins into Puget Sound at levels that may affect rockfish populations or the prey that support them. Several urban embayments in the Sound have high levels of heavy metals and organic compounds. About 32% of the sediments in Puget Sound are considered to be moderately or highly contaminated. Organisms that live in or eat these sediments are consumed thus transferring contaminants up the food web and to a wider area.

Not surprisingly, contaminants such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and chlorinated pesticides (e.g. DDT), and polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) appear in rockfish collected in urban areas. However, while highest levels of contamination occur in urban areas, toxins can be found in the tissues of animals in all regions of the sound (Team 2007). Indeed, rockfish collected in rural areas of the San Juan Islands revealed high levels mercury and hydrocarbons (West et al. 2002).

Although risks from contaminants can affect all life history stages of rockfish, few studies have investigated the effects of toxins on rockfish ecology or physiology. Contaminant may influence growth rates of rockfish. For example, Palsson et al (2008) describe a case in which male rockfish have lower growth rates than females—an unusual pattern for rockfish since males typically grow faster than females. The explanation may be that male rockfish tend to accumulate PCBs while female's body burden does not increase with time since they lower their toxin level when they release eggs. Thus, the observed difference in growth rate may result from the higher contaminant concentration in males versus females.

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Rockfish may also experience reproductive dysfunction as a result of contaminant exposure. Although no studies have shown an effect on rockfish, other fish in Puget Sound that have been studied do show a substantial impact. For instance in English sole, reproductive function is reduced in animals from contaminated areas, and this effectively decreases the productivity of the species (Landahl et al. 1997).

As noted earlier, rockfish rely to some degree on pelagic prey, and thus may experience greater exposure to persistent bioaccumulative toxics, across a greater spatial range (not just urban areas) than the discussion above suggests. Pelagic prey such as Pacific herring in Puget Sound have unusually high body burdens of toxins that can biomagnify in their predators. Long life span and residency in Puget Sound, both characteristics of the petitioned rockfish species, increase the risk of exposure. In addition, environmental levels of legacy toxins such as polychlorinated biphenyls were probably higher in Puget Sound's pelagic species in the 1970s and 80s, the period when the petitioned species declined. The full effect of contaminants on rockfish remains unknown, but there is clearly a potential for impact. Historically, rockfish were captured in great numbers in areas that are now subject to high levels of contaminants (compare Palsson et al. 2008 and Puget Sound Action Team 2007). In addition Palsson et al. suggest that urban embayments have become de facto no-take zones. Thus, in these contaminated areas we might expect to find relatively high densities of fish exposed to high levels of toxins. Such a scenario has the potential to greatly limit recovery of depleted rockfish populations.

In addition to chemical contamination, water quality in Puget Sound is also influenced by sewage, animal waste and nutrient inputs. The Washington Department of Ecology has been monitoring water quality in Puget Sound for several decades. Monitoring includes fecal coliform, nitrogen, ammonium and dissolved oxygen. In 2005, Of the 39 sites sampled, 8 were classified as highest concern, and 10 were classified as high concern. Dissolved oxygen (DO) has been an increasing concern. Hood Canal has seen persistent and increasing areas of low DO since the mid 1990s. Typically, rockfish move out of areas with DO less than 2 mg/L; however, when low DO waters were upwelled to the surface in 2003, about 26% of the rockfish population was killed (Palsson et al. 2008). In addition to Hood Canal, Palsson et al. report that periods of low DO are becoming more widespread in waters south of Tacoma Narrows.

## Predation

Prominent members of the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin foodweb are described in Appendix C. Here we highlight several predatory species or trophic groups that may significantly influence rockfish population dynamics.

Rockfish are important prey items of lingcod (Beaudreau and Essington 2007). Populations of lingcod have been low in Puget sound, but are increasing in recent years (Palsson et al. 2008). Ruckelshaus et al. (2009) examined the potential effect of predation by lingcod on rockfish recovery. Their models indicate that even very small increases in predation mortality within MPAs (i.e., 1.2%) are sufficient to negate the benefit of zero fishing pressure that occurs within MPAs.

Predation by pinnipeds may be locally significant. Four pinniped species are found in the waters of the state of Washington: the harbor seal, the California sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*), the Steller sea lion, and the northern elephant seal (*Mirounga*

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*angustirostris*). Harbor seal populations have increased from in the 100s during the 1970s to more than 10,000 at present (Jeffries et al. 2003). The harbor seal is the only pinniped species that breeds in Washington waters, and is the only pinniped with known haul-out sites in the San Juan Islands (Jeffries et al. 2000). Harbor seals are considered a threat to local fisheries in many areas (Olesiuk et al. 1990, Bjorge et al. 2002) and concerns have arisen about their impact on fisheries in Washington, Oregon and California, where consumption by California sea lions and harbor seals are estimated to be almost half of what is harvested in commercial fisheries (NMFS 1997). In Puget Sound, harbor seals are considered opportunistic feeders that consume seasonally and locally abundant prey (Olesiuk et al. 1990, London et al. 2001).

About 2000 Stellar sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*) occur seasonally in Washington waters, with dozens found in Puget Sound, particularly in the San Juan Islands (Palsson et al. 2008). About 8% of stellar sea lion diet is rockfish (Lance and Jeffries 2007). Though not abundant, their large size and aggregated distribution suggest that their local impact on could be non-trivial.

Fifteen species of marine birds breed along the Washington coast; seven of these have historically been found breeding in the San Juan Islands/Puget Sound area (Speich and Wahl 1989). The predominant breeding marine birds in the San Juan Islands are pigeon guillemots, double-crested cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*), pelagic cormorants (*Phalacrocorax pelagicus*), and members of the western gull/glaucous-winged gull complex (*Larus occidentalis/glaucescens*) (Speich and Wahl 1989). The first three species are locally abundant. Whether or not these avian predators have an impact on rockfish populations is unknown.

## Disease

Rockfish are susceptible to diseases and parasites (Love et al. 2002), but their impact on the petitioned species is not known. Palsson et al. (2008) suggest that stress associated with poor water quality may exacerbate the incidence and severity of naturally occurring diseases to the point of directly or indirectly decreasing survivorship of the petitioned species.

## Competition

Rockfishes are known to compete for resources (Larson 1980). Harvey et al. (2006) documented the decline of bocaccio in the California Current, and used bioenergetic models to suggest that recovery of coastal populations of bocaccio may be inhibited by their more common congeners. In Puget Sound, more abundant species such as copper rockfish and quillback rockfish may interact with juvenile bocaccio, canary rockfish or yelloweye rockfish and limit the ability of these petitioned species to recover from perturbations. However, evidence documenting competition in Puget Sound is generally lacking.

## Release of propagated fish

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Chinook and coho salmon consume larval and juvenile rockfish, and they also share prey with small size classes of rockfish (Buckley 1997), and thus large releases of hatchery salmon have the potential to influence the population dynamics of the petitioned species. Total hatchery releases in Puget Sound have mirrored those in the California Current region (Naish et al. 2007), with hatchery releases of delayed released Chinook and coho into Puget Sound averaged 21.2 million fish annually from 1983 to 2000. Present annual releases are now around 14.7 million (Palsson et al. 2008).

Lingcod have been identified as a suitable species for enhancement via hatcheries under the Puget Sound Recreational Fishery Enhancement Fund. A collaborative effort by the Washington SCUBA Alliance, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, Squaxin Island Tribe, and NOAA resulted in a small-scale release of three-year-old lingcod in South Puget Sound in 2001. Additional small-scale releases (< 100 fish) are planned in the near future. Long-term (and subject to funding), the annual release of ca. 9000 lingcod into the southern portion of Puget Sound is planned (Lee 2008, Wayne Palsson, pers. comm.). As described above, lingcod may be important predators of rockfish. Because lingcod exhibit limited movement (Tolimieri et al. in press), large hatchery releases of lingcod have the potential to have a large local impact on rockfish populations.

#### Bycatch

Rockfish are unintentionally captured as part of fishing activities targeting other species. Although fishers may return these fish to the water, the mortality rate of these fish is extremely high (Parker et al. 2006). Although there are some methods available that could lower the mortality rates of discarded rockfish (summarized by Palsson et al. 2008), application of these methods in the Puget Sound fishery would be difficult (Palsson et al. 2008). Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife consider bycatch of rockfish to be a “high impact stressor” on rockfish populations (Palsson et al. 2008).

#### Derelict Fishing Gear

Palsson et al. (2008) report that there are more than 3600 pieces of abandoned fishing gear (especially gillnets) have been located in Puget Sound. About 35% of this derelict gear has been removed. Derelict nets continue fishing and are known to kill rockfish. While the total impact of this abandoned gear has not been fully enumerated, WDFW has concluded that derelict gear is likely to moderately affect local populations of rockfish (Palsson et al. 2008).

#### Climate

As discussed earlier and in Appendix B, patterns of circulation and productivity in Puget Sound are fundamentally influenced by climate conditions. Briefly, changes in the timing of freshwater input affect stratification and mixing in the sound, while changes in wind pattern influence the amount of biologically important upwelled water that enters the Strait of Juan de Fuca from the coast (Snover et al. 2005). Direct studies on the effect

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of climate variability on rockfish are rare, but all the studies performed to date suggest that climate places an extremely important role in population dynamics. Tolimeri and Levin (Tolimeri and Levin 2005) examined the effects of climate variability on bocaccio recruitment. They found that the dynamics of bocaccio populations were governed by rare recruitment events, and that these rare events resulted when specific climate conditions occurred at different times in their early life history. The coincidence of such climate patterns only occurred 15% of the time. Harvey (2005) created a generic bioenergetic model for rockfish, arguing that productivity of rockfish is high influenced by climate conditions such that El Nino-like conditions generally lowered growth rates and increased generation time. The negative effect of the warm water conditions associated with El Nino appear to be common across rockfishes (Moser et al. 2000). Field and Ralston (Field and Ralston 2005) noted that recruitment of all species of rockfish appeared to be correlated at large scales and hypothesized that such synchrony was the result of large-scale climate forcing. Exactly how climate influences the petitioned species in Puget Sound is unknown; however, given the general importance of climate to Puget Sound and to rockfish, it is likely that climate strongly influences the dynamics of the petitioned species.

## ***Overall Risk Determination***

The BRT's analysis of overall risk to the species used the categories of "high risk" of extinction; at "moderate risk" of extinction; or "not at risk" of extinction. Table 26 describes the qualitative reference levels of extinction risk associated with these terms. The overall extinction risk determination reflected informed professional judgment by each BRT member. This assessment was guided by the results of the risk matrix analysis, integrating information about demographic risks with expectations about likely interactions with threats and other factors.

To allow individuals to express uncertainty in determining the overall level of extinction risk facing the species, the BRT adopted the "likelihood point" method, often referred to as the "FEMAT" method because it is a variation of a method used by scientific teams evaluating options under the Northwest Forest Plan (Forest Ecosystem Management: An Ecological, Economic, and Social Assessment Report of the Forest Ecosystem Management Assessment Team (FEMAT), 1993). (See Table 27 for an example worksheet). In this approach, each BRT member distributes ten likelihood points among the three species extinction risk categories, reflecting their opinion of how likely that category correctly reflects the true species status. Thus, if a member were certain that the species was in the "not at risk" category, he or she could assign all ten points to that category. A reviewer with less certainty about the species' status could split the points among two or even three categories. This method has been used in all status review updates for anadromous Pacific salmonids since 1999, as well as in reviews of Puget Sound rockfishes (Stout et al. 2001b), Pacific herring (Stout et al. 2001a; Gustafson et al. 2006), Pacific hake, walleye pollock, Pacific cod (Gustafson et al. 2000), and black abalone (Butler et al. 2008).



## **Conclusions regarding risk status for each of the 5 DPSs of Puget Sound rockfish**

### **I. Bocaccio**

#### ***Evaluation of Demographic Risks***

##### **Abundance**

BRT scores for abundance of the bocaccio DPS ranged from 4 to 5 with a mean score of 4.78 ( $\pm 0.15$  SD) and a modal score of 5. A score of 4 represents “high risk” and a score of 5 represents “very high risk.” 7 of the 9 BRT members scored this category as a 5 “very high risk”. In this context, very high risk means that current trends and levels of abundance by themselves indicate danger of extinction in the near future.

Several BRT members commented that there are few good data available to adequately judge bocaccio abundance trends. Comments on the abundance criterion included consideration that: 1) There were historical catch data reflecting consistent former abundance in portions of the bocaccio DPS; 2) Compared with former abundance, the bocaccio DPS has been at all time low abundance levels for the past several years exhibiting a disturbing trend in abundance of 0; 3) Recent Canadian COSEWIC abundance data for bocaccio, as indicated by catch records, is low in all or nearly all spawning populations relative to earlier periods 4). Low dissolved oxygen event in Puget Sound that affected historic range.

##### **Growth Rate/Productivity**

BRT scores for growth rate and productivity of the bocaccio DPS ranged from 4 to 5 with a mean score of 4.78 ( $\pm 0.15$  SE) and a modal score of 5. BRT members scored this category as 5–very high risk. A score of 5 represents “very high risk.” In this context, very high risk means that population productivity (growth rate) by itself indicates danger of extinction in the near future.

Many BRT members felt that there was insufficient data to adequately score this category with any certainty. However several BRT members noted that low abundance in the bocaccio DPS is likely resulting in reduced productivity. Tolimeri and Levin (2005) found that bocaccio population growth rate, in the absence of harvest, is around 1.01, indicating a very low intrinsic growth rate for this species. Other studies suggest that populations are not capable of supporting continuous harvest. Demographically, this species demonstrates some of the highest recruitment variability among rockfish species, with many years of failed recruitment being the norm (Tolimieri and Levin 2005). High fecundity and episodic recruitment events, largely correlated with environmental conditions, mean that bocaccio populations do not follow consistent growth trajectories. Sporadic recruitment drives population structure. The BRT did not note any positive indications for population growth rate and productivity.

##### **Spatial Structure and Connectivity**

BRT scores for spatial structure and connectivity of the bocaccio DPS ranged from 3 to 4 with a mean score of 3.56 ( $\pm 0.18$  SE) and a modal score of 4. BRT members

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scored this category as 4–high risk. A score of 4 represents “high risk” which, in this context, means that population spatial structure and connectivity contribute significantly to long-term risk of extinction and are likely to contribute to short-term risk of extinction in the foreseeable future.

Comments on spatial structure and connectivity criteria included concerns that: 1) Apart from an isolated historical population in the southern portion of this DPS in southern Puget Sound other populations do not appear to be viable; 2) The loss of former populations has likely resulted in a contraction of the bocaccio DPS’s range; 3) The potential loss of habitat due to hypoxia issues in south sound; 4) Juvenile recruitment depends on the availability of specific types of macro algae (kelp), which is also decreasing in some portions of the DPS. 5) Size data suggests a cohort population structure that differs from coastal populations, and thus provides some evidence of that this DPS is only weakly connected to California Current bocaccio. However, one BRT member thought that this DPS may consist of a vagrant population seeded by coastal populations.

### **Diversity**

BRT scores for diversity of the bocaccio DPS ranged from 3 to 4 with a mean score of 3.11 ( $\pm 0.26$  SE) and a modal score of 3. A score of 3 represents “moderate risk.” In this context, moderate risk means that diversity contributes significantly to long-term risk of extinction, but does not in itself constitute a danger of extinction in the near future.

Several BRT members commented that the apparent uniformity in life history traits and low genetic diversity across the entire range of the biological species made it difficult to assign a risk score to the diversity category. Comments on the diversity criterion included concerns related to: 1) the unique habitats in the Puget Sound ecosystem, when compared to the coast, which may have led to unique adaptations to conditions at the northern extent of the species’ range; 2) The potential loss of diversity in the bocaccio DPS due to contraction of effective population size and a truncated age structure due to harvest selection; 3) Variable ocean conditions (exacerbated by climate change) that may lead to a mismatch with current diversity traits. The BRT did not note any positive signs pertinent to the diversity parameter for this DPS.

### **Recent Events**

For recent events, the BRT’s scores ranged from double minus to single minus (– to -) with a mode of single minus (–). These scores reflect an assessment that recent events, considered collectively, are likely to have an overall negative impact on long-term viability of the bocaccio DPS. The recent drop in abundance of the bocaccio DPS coupled with the probable disruption of metapopulation structure, may make it more difficult for the bocaccio DPS to rebuild.

## ***Qualitative Threats Assessment***

The results of the BRT’s analysis of the severity of threats the bocaccio DPS are presented in Table 28. Presented in the table are the median threat scores with the

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standard deviation (SD) about the median. The BRT ranked low dissolved oxygen, recreational and commercial harvest as the most serious threat to persistence of the bocaccio DPS. In some categories some portion of the BRT felt that insufficient data was available to score the threat severity (thereby marking the threat severity as “unknown”).

### ***Overall Risk Summary***

Bocaccio appear to have declined in frequency in Puget Sound Proper, relative to other species, from the 1970s to the present. From 1975-1979, bocaccio were reported as an average of 4.63% of the catch. From 1980-1989, they were 0.24% of the rockfish identified, and from 1996 to 2007, bocaccio have not been observed out of the 2238 rockfish identified in the dockside surveys of the recreational catches. In a sample this large, the probability of observing at least 1 bocaccio would be 99.5% assuming it was at the same frequency (0.24%) as in the 1980s. In conclusion, there is strong support in the data for a decline in the frequency of bocaccio relative to other species in Puget Sound Proper. We do know from other data sources (scuba surveys) that although rare, bocaccio rockfish were present in Puget Sound Proper as recently as 2001. In North Puget Sound, bocaccio have always been rare in the surveys of the recreational fishery. In the Strait of Georgia, bocaccio have been documented in some inlets, but records are sparse, isolated, and often based on anecdotal reports (COSEWIC, 2002).

Size-frequency distributions for bocaccio in the 1970s indicate a wide range of sizes, with recreationally caught individuals from 25 to 85 cm. Although the distribution is clearly bimodal, some individuals in every 5 cm class are represented. This broad size distribution suggests a spread of ages, with some successful recruitment over many years. A similar range of sizes is also evident in the 1980s. These patterns are more likely to result from a self-sustaining population within the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin DPS rather than sporadic immigration from coastal populations. The temporal trend in size distributions for bocaccio also suggests size truncation of the population, with larger fish becoming less common over time. By the decade of the 2000s, no bocaccio data were available, so the BRT was not able to determine if the size truncation continued in this decade.

Overall, the BRT was very concerned about downward trend in bocaccio abundance, and a large majority of the BRT concluded that this trend was, by itself, sufficient to indicate that the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound bocaccio DPS was in danger of extinction in the near future. The BRT was also concerned that bocaccio as a species have a very low intrinsic rate of population growth even in the absence of harvest or other threats that may limit productivity, and the size distribution of bocaccio in Puget Sound appeared to be trending toward smaller, less productive sizes. Bocaccio are also characterized by highly variable recruitment that is largely driven by environmental conditions which occur only infrequently (Tolimieri and Levin 2005). Even in the absence of continued exploitation, the BRT was therefore concerned that GBPS bocaccio were at risk due to their low abundance and low intrinsic population growth rate. In addition, the BRT noted that because the GBPS bocaccio DPS is largely isolated from the rest of the species', it appeared unlikely that dispersal from coastal populations, which themselves are highly depressed, would be sufficient to maintain the abundance of the DPS. Threats to this DPS include areas of low dissolved oxygen within their range, the

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potential for continued losses as by-catch in recreational and commercial harvest, the reduction of kelp habitat necessary for juvenile recruitment. The BRT's conclusions regarding the overall risk to the Georgia Basin bocaccio DPS were weighted heavily to "high risk" (59/90) with substantially less support for "moderate risk" (29/90) and almost no support for "not at risk" (2/90).

Although there have been no confirmed observations of bocaccio in Georgia Basin/Puget Sound for ca. 7 years, the BRT concluded that there was no compelling reason to believe that the DPS has been extirpated. In particular, although it has disappeared from the recreational catch, the recreational fishery does not provide a complete sampling of Puget Sound/Georgia Basin area. Additionally, existing fishery regulations limit potential observations from bycatch in the setnet fishery, where bocaccio were reliably observed through the 1980s. Given the lack of an intensive effort to completely enumerate bocaccio and the long life-span of the species, the BRT concluded that it is likely that the DPS still exists at a very low abundance and would be observed with a sufficiently intensive observation program.

### ***"Significant Portion of its Range" Question***

The BRT concluded that the bocaccio DPS is at "high risk" of extinction throughout all of its range and in effect answering the question in the affirmative as to "whether the bocaccio DPS is at risk throughout a significant portion of its range."

## II. Canary Rockfish

### ***Evaluation of Demographic Risks***

#### **Abundance**

BRT scores for abundance of the canary rockfish DPS ranged from 3 to 5 with a mean score of 4 ( $\pm 0.288$  SE) and a modal score of 3. 7 of the 9 BRT members scored this as 5 – very high risk. In this context, high risk means that current trends and levels of abundance contribute significantly to long-term risk of extinction and are likely to contribute to short-term risk of extinction in the foreseeable future. Very high risk means that current trends and levels of abundance by themselves indicate danger of extinction in the near future.

Several BRT members commented that there are few good data available to adequately judge canary rockfish abundance trends. Catch records are a poor substitute for fisheries independent data, leading to high levels of uncertainty. Comments on the abundance criterion included consideration that: 1) No “core population” or sub-population is at normal levels of abundance anywhere in the DPS; 2) The DPS has been at all time low abundance levels for the past several years exhibiting a disturbing trend in abundance, which is declining at a faster rate than other rockfish populations; 3) Recent 10 year abundance in the DPS [as indicated by catch and scuba survey records] is low in all or nearly all spawning populations relative to earlier periods; 4). It formerly comprised one of the top 3 species found in the WDFW recreational catch data, which is no longer the case.

#### **Growth Rate/Productivity**

BRT scores for growth rate and productivity of the canary rockfish DPS ranged from 3 to 5 with a mean score of 4.11 ( $\pm 0.20$  SE) and a modal score of 4. 6 of the 9 BRT members scored this category as 4–“high risk”. In this context, high risk means that population productivity (growth rate) contributes significantly to the long-term risk of extinction and is likely to contribute to short-term risk of extinction in the foreseeable future.

Many BRT members felt that there was insufficient data to adequately score this category with any certainty. However several BRT members noted that low abundance in the canary rockfish DPS is likely resulting in reduced productivity. Life history traits would suggest intrinsic slow growth rate and low rates of productivity for this species, specifically its age at maturity (9 years) and its maximum age (84 years). Other BRT members noted that long generation time for canary rockfish means they have very low rates of productivity (Love et al 2002). Although commercial and recreational fishing has been curtailed, this was felt to have depressed populations to a threshold beyond which optimal productivity might be unattainable. The BRT did not note any positive indications for population growth rate and productivity for this DPS.

#### **Spatial Structure and Connectivity**

BRT scores for spatial structure and connectivity of the canary rockfish DPS ranged from 2 to 4 with a mean score of 2.89 ( $\pm 0.20$  SE) and a modal score of 3. 6 of the 9 BRT members scored this category as 3–“moderate risk”. In this context, moderate

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risk means that population spatial structure and connectivity contribute significantly to long-term risk of extinction, but do not by themselves constitute a danger of extinction in the near future.

Comments on spatial structure and connectivity criteria included concerns that: 1) South Puget Sound populations are no longer viable; 2) The loss of either the North or South Puget Sound populations could result in a contraction of the canary rockfish range within this DPS; 3) There is little known about population structure, or lack of structure, in this DPS. 4) Although adults are known to move into other areas, there does not appear to be a strong refugial population anywhere in this DPS 5) Several historically large populations in the canary rockfish DPS may have been lost, including an area of historic distribution in South Puget Sound which has declined due to low dissolved oxygen events; 6) Low abundance may result in disconnection among historically connected populations across this DPS, as reflected in their current patchy distribution. Positive signs for spatial structure and connectivity include considerations that adults are capable of migrating hundreds of kilometers.

### **Diversity**

BRT scores for diversity of the canary rockfish DPS ranged from 2 to 4 with a mean score of 3 ( $\pm 0.26$  SE) and a modal score of 3. 5 of the 9 BRT members scored this category as a 3 – “moderate risk”. In this context, moderate risk means that diversity contributes significantly to long-term risk of extinction, but does not in itself constitute a danger of extinction in the near future.

Several BRT members commented that the apparent uniformity in life history traits and low genetic diversity across the entire range of the biological species made it difficult to assign a risk score to the diversity category. Comments on the diversity criterion included concerns related to: 1) The unique ecological features of Puget Sound, which may have resulted in unique adaptations; 2) A truncated age structure and loss of large spawning females, perhaps as a result of size-selective harvest; 3) Variable ocean conditions (exacerbated by climate change) in the DPS that may lead to a mismatch with current diversity traits. Other comments on diversity noted that there is little evidence that diversity is critical for rockfish species, in general, and that there is a paucity of data supporting high genetic diversity for this DPS, whereas data from coastal populations reflect only a moderate level of genetic diversity.

### **Recent Events**

For recent events, the BRT’s scores ranged from double minus to single minus (– to -) with a mode of single minus (–). These scores reflect an assessment that recent events, considered collectively, are likely to have an overall negative impact on long-term viability of the canary rockfish DPS. The recent drop in abundance of the canary rockfish DPS coupled with the probable disruption of metapopulation structure, may make it more difficult for the canary rockfish DPS to recover.

## ***Qualitative Threats Assessment***

[Type text]

The results of the BRT's analysis of the severity of threats the canary rockfish DPS are presented in Table 28. Presented in the table are the median threat scores with the standard deviation (SD) about the median threat scores. The BRT ranked effects of commercial and recreational harvests the most serious threat to persistence of the canary rockfish DPS. Loss of nearshore habitat, low levels of dissolved oxygen, chemical contamination and high nutrient loading were also ranked in the top four threats in the canary rockfish DPS. In some categories some portion of the BRT felt that insufficient data was available to score the threat severity (thereby marking the threat severity as "unknown").

### ***Overall Risk Summary***

The BRT was concerned about what appears to be a steep decline in the abundance of canary rockfish in Puget Sound/Georgia Basin. Canary rockfish have become less frequent in the catch data since 1965. In Puget Sound Proper canary rockfish occurred at frequencies above 2% in the 1960s and 1970s, but by the late 1990s had declined to about 0.76%. In North Puget Sound, the frequency of canary rockfish exceeded 6% in the 1960s and declined to 0.56% in the 1990s. Based on this decline in frequency, combined with the overall decline in rockfish abundance in Puget Sound, the BRT concluded that the current trend in abundance contributes significantly to the extinction risk of the DPS. The BRT was also concerned that the low intrinsic productivity combined with continuing threats from by-catch in commercial and recreational harvest, loss of near shore habitat, chemical contamination, and areas of low dissolved oxygen, increase the extinction risk of this species. The BRT was also concerned about downward trends in the size of the canary rockfish in Puget Sound. Canary rockfish exhibited a broad spread of sizes in the 1970s. However, by the 2000s, there were far fewer size classes represented and no fish > 55 cm were recorded in the recreational data. Although some of this truncation may be a function of the overall lower number of sampled fish, the data in general suggest few older fish remain in the population. The BRT noted that this species is more mobile than many other rockfish species, which may help preserve genetic diversity by increasing connectivity among breeding populations. However, the BRT was concerned about the lack of specific information on canary rockfish population structure within the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound area, and noted that there does not appear to be a stronghold for canary rockfish anywhere within the range of the DPS. The BRT's conclusions regarding the overall risk to the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound canary rockfish DPS were heavily weighted toward "moderate risk" (50/90), with minority support for "high risk" (22/90) and "not at risk" (18/90).

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### ***“Significant Portion of its Range” Question***

The BRT concluded that the canary rockfish DPS is at “moderate risk’ of extinction throughout all of its range and in effect answering the question in the affirmative as to “whether the canary rockfish DPS is at risk throughout a significant portion of its range.”



### **III. Yelloweye Rockfish**

#### ***Evaluation of Demographic Risks***

##### **Abundance**

BRT scores for abundance of the yelloweye rockfish DPS ranged from 3 to 5 with a mean score of  $3.67 \pm 0.26$  SE) and a modal score of 3. A score of 4 represents “high risk”. In this context, high risk means that current trends and levels of abundance contribute significantly to long-term risk of extinction and are likely to contribute to short-term risk of extinction in the foreseeable future.

Several BRT members commented that there are few good data available to adequately judge yelloweye rockfish abundance trends. Catch records are a poor substitute for fisheries independent data, leading to high levels of uncertainty. Comments on the abundance criterion included consideration that: 1) large declines in North Puget Sound, but effects of changing harvest regulations may mask the magnitude of the decline; 2) Wallace (2002) documents large historical populations in the Strait of Georgia; 3) Palsson et al. (2008) estimates approximately 3000 individuals, although recent 10 year abundance in the yelloweye rockfish DPS [as indicated by catch and trawl records] is low in all or nearly all spawning populations relative to earlier periods. Additionally, some BRT members noted that if yelloweye rockfish in Puget Sound proper are distinct from those in the Strait of Georgia, it is possible that the trends in abundance understate the degree to which they are at risk.

##### **Growth Rate/Productivity**

BRT scores for growth rate and productivity of the yelloweye rockfish DPS ranged from 3 to 5 with a mean score of  $4.11 (\pm 0.26)$  SE) and a modal score of 4. 4 BRT members scored this category as 4 - high risk, while 3 BRT members scored this as 5 – very high risk. In this context, high risk means that population productivity (growth rate) contributes significantly to the long-term risk of extinction and is likely to contribute to short-term risk of extinction in the foreseeable future. Very high risk means that population productivity (growth rate) by itself indicates danger of extinction in the near future.

Many BRT members felt that there was insufficient data to adequately score this category with any certainty. However several BRT members noted that: 1. Long generations times (e.g. 50% age at maturity is 15-20 years) reflect intrinsic low productivity for this species; 2. Larger, older females are most productive, but these individuals are reduced in abundance; 3. Low productivity in the yelloweye rockfish DPS reflects the overall decrease in productivity for all rockfish species in this region. The BRT did not note any positive indications for population growth rate and productivity.

##### **Spatial Structure and Connectivity**

BRT scores for spatial structure and connectivity of the yelloweye rockfish DPS ranged from 2 to 4 with a mean score of  $3.11 (\pm 0.20)$  SE) and a modal score of 3. 6 BRT members scored this category as 3–moderate risk. In this context, moderate risk means that population spatial structure and connectivity contribute significantly to long-term risk of extinction, but do not by themselves constitute a danger of extinction in the near future.

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Comments on spatial structure and connectivity criteria included concerns that: 1) South Puget Sound populations are no longer viable; 2) The loss of these populations may eventually result in a contraction of the yelloweye rockfish DPS; 3) No evidence of spatially structured populations in the DPS.; 4) Although larval dispersal through currents may increase connectivity, adult movement is limited. The BRT did not note any positive signs for spatial structure and connectivity.

### **Diversity**

BRT scores for diversity of the yelloweye rockfish DPS ranged from 2 to 4 with a mean score of 3.11 ( $\pm 0.26$  SE) and a modal score of 3. A score of 3 represents “moderate risk.” In this context, moderate risk means that diversity contributes significantly to long-term risk of extinction, but does not in itself constitute a danger of extinction in the near future.

Several BRT members commented that the apparent uniformity in life history traits and low genetic diversity across the entire range of the biological species made it difficult to assign a risk score to the diversity category. Comments on the diversity criterion included concerns related to: 1) The apparent loss of population structure in Canadian waters 2) The truncation of size and age structure, particularly the loss of older and larger fish may reduce the viability of offspring; 3) Selective harvest may lead to shifts in phenotypic traits, e.g. size at age. The BRT did not note any positive signs for diversity.

### **Recent Events**

For recent events, the BRT’s scores ranged from double minus to double plus (– – to ++) with a mode of neutral. These scores reflect an assessment that recent events, considered collectively, are likely to have an overall negative impact on long-term viability of the yelloweye rockfish DPS. The recent harvest restrictions imposed by WDFW and the treaty tribes were viewed as having no impact. However, the potential COSEWIC listing in Canadian waters was viewed as having a potential positive impact. The effects of these recent positive and negative events are difficult to estimate; most members indicated that the net effect is likely to be neutral.

## ***Qualitative Threats Assessment***

The results of the BRT’s analysis of the severity of threats the yelloweye rockfish DPS are presented in Table 28. Presented in the table are the median threat scores and the standard deviation (SD) about the scores. The BRT ranked effects of commercial and recreational harvests the most serious threat to persistence of the yelloweye rockfish DPS. Loss of nearshore habitat, low levels of dissolved oxygen, chemical contamination and high nutrient loading were also ranked in the top four threats in the yelloweye rockfish DPS. In some categories some portion of the BRT felt that insufficient data was available to score the threat severity (thereby marking the threat severity as “unknown”).

[Type text]

## **Overall Risk Summary**

The frequency of yelloweye rockfish in Puget Sound Proper does not show a consistent trend with percent frequencies less than 1 in the 1960s and 1980s and about 3% in the 1970s and 1990s. In North Puget Sound, however, the frequency of yelloweye rockfish decreased from a high of > 3% in the 1970s to a frequency of 0.65% in the most recent samples. Based on this decline in frequency in North Sound, combined with the overall decline in rockfish abundance in Puget Sound, the BRT concluded that the current trend in abundance contributes significantly to the extinction risk of the DPS. Like bocaccio and canary rockfish, the BRT was also concerned that the low intrinsic productivity combined with continuing threats from by-catch in commercial and recreational harvest, loss of near shore habitat, chemical contamination, and areas of low dissolved oxygen, increase the extinction risk of this species. Recreationally caught yelloweye rockfish in the 1970s spanned a broad range of sizes. By the 2000s, there was some evidence of fewer older fish in the population. However, overall numbers of fish in the database were also much lower, making it difficult to determine if clear size truncation occurred. The BRT's conclusions regarding the overall risk to the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound canary rockfish DPS were heavily weighted toward "moderate risk" (53/90), with minority support for "high risk" (21/90) and "not at risk" (16/90).

### ***"Significant Portion of its Range" Question***

The BRT concluded that the yelloweye rockfish DPS is at "moderate risk" of extinction throughout all of its range and in effect answering the question in the affirmative as to "whether the yelloweye DPS is at risk throughout a significant portion of its range."

## **IV. Greenstriped Rockfish**

### ***Evaluation of Demographic Risks***

#### **Abundance**

BRT scores for abundance of the greenstriped rockfish DPS ranged from 2 to 4 with a mean score of 2.78( $\pm$  0.28 SE) and a modal score of 2. A score of 3 represents “moderate risk. In this context, moderate risk means that diversity contributes significantly to long-term risk of extinction, but does not in itself constitute a danger of extinction in the near future.

Several BRT members commented that there are few good data available to adequately judge greenstriped rockfish abundance trends. Comments on the abundance criterion included consideration that: 1) Abundance may be relatively low, but a constant biomass persists; 2) The effects of fishing pressure is unknown, however commercial trawling in Puget Sound has ceased; 3) Absolute abundance, whether current or historical, remains unknown.

#### **Growth Rate/Productivity**

BRT scores for growth rate and productivity of the greenstriped rockfish DPS ranged from 2 to 4 with a mean score of 2.78 ( $\pm$  0.22 SE) and a modal score of 3. 5 BRT members scored this category as 3 – moderate risk. In this context, moderate risk means that population productivity (growth rate) contributes significantly to long-term risk of extinction, but does not in itself constitute a danger of extinction in the near future.

Many BRT members felt that there was insufficient data to adequately score this category with any certainty. However several BRT members noted that: 1. Low abundance in the DPS is likely resulting in reduced productivity; 2. This species tends to be relatively productive when compared to other rockfish species, with a 50% maturity at 7-19 years; 4. Although it is not usually a targeted species, it remains susceptible to discarding. Positive indications for population growth rate and productivity included considerations that this is not highly valued by recreational fishers.

#### **Spatial Structure and Connectivity**

BRT scores for spatial structure and connectivity of the greenstriped rockfish DPS ranged from 2 to 3 with a mean score of 2.33 ( $\pm$  0.17 SE) and a modal score of 2. 6 BRT members scored this category as 2 – low risk. In this context, low risk means that it is unlikely that diversity contributes significantly to risk of extinction by itself, but some concern that it may, in combination with other factors.

Comments on spatial structure and connectivity criteria included concerns that: 1) This species tends to be a habitat generalist and uses a commonly available habitat in this DPS; 2. Although its distribution in this DPS tends to be patchy, its wide distribution provides evidence of high connectivity; 3. Adult movement is believed to be low, but its dispersal period is larval; 4. It is not reliant on the less frequent rocky habitat in this DPS. Most of these aspects were viewed as positive signs for spatial structure and connectivity for this DPS.

#### **Diversity**

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BRT scores for diversity of the greenstriped rockfish DPS ranged from 1 to 3 with a mean score of 2.22 ( $\pm$  0.22 SE) and a modal score of 2. A score of 2 represents “low risk”. In this context, low risk means that it is unlikely that diversity contributes significantly to risk of extinction by itself, but some concern that it may, in combination with other factors.

Several BRT members commented that the apparent uniformity in life history traits and low genetic diversity across the entire range of the biological species made it difficult to assign a risk score to the diversity category. Comments on the diversity criterion included concerns related to: 1. The absence of relevant genetic and life history data from individuals sampled within this DPS; 2. The unique ecological aspects of Puget Sound Proper, discussed above, that might lead to local adaptations.

### **Recent Events**

For recent events, the BRT’s scores consisted of a single minus (–). These scores reflect an assessment that recent events, considered collectively, are likely to have an overall negative impact on long-term viability of the greenstriped rockfish DPS. BRT members noted that there were no longer recent threats due to harvest, but increased pollution, low dissolved oxygen events, and invasive species (jellyfishes) may have posed a threat. The effects of these recent events are difficult to estimate; most members indicated that the net effect is likely to be negative.

### ***Qualitative Threats Assessment***

The results of the BRT’s analysis of the severity of threats the greenstriped rockfish DPS are presented in Table 28. Presented in the table are the median threat scores with the standard deviation (SD) about the median threat scores. The BRT ranked low dissolved oxygen events as the most serious threat to persistence of the greenstriped rockfish DPS. Contamination, nutrient loading and commercial harvesting and by-catch were also ranked in the top four threats in the greenstriped rockfish DPS. In some categories some portion of the BRT felt that insufficient data was available to score the threat severity (thereby marking the threat severity as “unknown”).

### ***Overall Risk Summary***

Greenstriped rockfish do not occur in the recreational catch data from North Puget Sound and occur very infrequently in the Puget Sound Proper recreational catch data, presumably due to the low value attached to this species. Bag limits were imposed in 1983 and the bag limit was further reduced in 1994 and 2000. Since greenstriped rockfish are smaller than other species, the bag limit may lead to discarding and thus under-representation of greenstriped rockfish in the recreational catch. Greenstriped rockfish appear in a low frequency in the WDFW fisheries independent trawl survey, but they were caught in the most recent years of the WDFW trawl survey in Puget Sound Proper (in both 2002 and 2005). Thus although greenstriped rockfish have been almost entirely absent from the recreational catch from 1999-2007, they are still present in Puget Sound Proper. The BRT was concerned about the lack of information on the abundance trends of greenstriped rockfish, but noted that Puget Sound Proper has large areas of the

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unconsolidated habitat that are used by this species, and that this species has somewhat higher intrinsic productivity than other rockfish species. The BRT noted that this species is not preferred by recreational anglers, and may therefore be less susceptible to overharvest. Because this species is also more of a habitat generalist than many other rockfish the BRT was less concerned about risks from habitat loss or reduced diversity. Size distributions do not suggest any size truncation since the 1970s. The BRT did note that areas of low dissolved oxygen are a potential risk factor. The BRT conclusions regarding the overall risk the DPS were weighted toward “not at risk” (53/90), with “moderate risk” receiving minority support (29/90) and “high risk” receiving very little support (8/90).

### ***“Significant Portion of its Range” Question***

The BRT concluded that the greenstriped rockfish DPS is “not at risk” of extinction throughout all of its range and in effect answering the question in the negative as to “whether the greenstriped rockfish DPS is at risk throughout a significant portion of its range.”

## **V. Redstripe Rockfish**

### ***Evaluation of Demographic Risks***

#### **Abundance**

BRT scores for abundance of the redstripe rockfish DPS ranged from 2 to 4 with a mean score of 2.56(± 0.24 SE) and a modal score of 2. A score of 2 represents “low risk”. In this context, low risk means that it is unlikely that diversity contributes significantly to risk of extinction by itself, but some concern that it may, in combination with other factors.

Several BRT members commented that there are few good data available to adequately judge redstripe rockfish abundance trends. Comments on the abundance criterion included consideration that: 1) Although abundance may be relatively low, it remains fairly consistent over time; 2. This species displays a patchy distribution, but is periodically caught in large numbers in WDFW trawls (Palsson 2008); 3. Declines in the recreational catch data from Puget Sound are likely due to discarding, as the decline coincides with reduced bag limits and this species is “less desirable”; 4. COSEWIC reported that from 1996-2001 this species represented 7% of the bottom trawl in the outer coast; 5. Its absolute abundance remains unknown, but it appears to be highly abundant in certain areas.

#### **Growth Rate/Productivity**

BRT scores for growth rate and productivity of the redstripe rockfish DPS ranged from 2 to 4 with a mean score of 2.78 (± 0.22 SE) and a modal score of 3. 5 BRT members scored this category as 3–moderate risk. In this context, moderate risk means

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that population productivity (growth rate) contributes significantly to long-term risk of extinction, but does not in itself constitute a danger of extinction in the near future.

Many BRT members felt that there was insufficient data to adequately score this category with any certainty. However several BRT members noted: 1. This species generally has a higher growth rate, smaller size, shorter generation times, and earlier maturity than other rockfishes; 2. Mortality due to discarding may decrease productivity, but this species is not targeted. These were viewed as positive indications for population growth rate and productivity.

### **Spatial Structure and Connectivity**

BRT scores for spatial structure and connectivity of the redstripe rockfish DPS ranged from 2 to 3 with a mean score of 2.22 ( $\pm 0.15$  SE) and a modal score of 2. 7 BRT members scored this category as 2 – low risk. In this context, low risk means that it is unlikely that diversity contributes significantly to risk of extinction by itself, but some concern that it may, in combination with other factors.

Comments on spatial structure and connectivity criteria included: 1. There is little evidence of change from its historical state; 2. It is found in WDFW trawls through Puget Sound (Palsson 2008); 3. There is no data as to whether underwater sills actually impede movement, and little information on movement for this DPS; 4. This species is found on the coast and in the Strait of Juan de Fuca; 5. Although adults are not known to move great distances, the larval phase is believed to comprise the dispersal period; 6. This is a habitat generalist, although it is not ubiquitous in the DPS; 6. No genetic data on population structure is available. Generally, these comments were viewed as positive signs for spatial structure and connectivity.

### **Diversity**

BRT scores for diversity of the redstripe rockfish DPS ranged from 1 to 3 with a mean score of 2.22 ( $\pm 0.22$  SE) and a modal score of 2. A score of 2 represents “low risk”. In this context, low risk means that it is unlikely that diversity contributes significantly to risk of extinction by itself, but some concern that it may, in combination with other factors.

Several BRT members commented that the apparent uniformity in life history traits and low genetic diversity across the entire range of the biological species made it difficult to assign a risk score to the diversity category. Comments on the diversity criterion included concerns related to: 1) The absence of data related to change in traits for this DPS; 2. As a deep water species, little is known about its diversity; 3. Puget Sound represents a unique ecosystem, although local adaptation is not known for this species; 4. There is no genetic data for this DPS, but some other rockfish species in Puget Sound display some degree of genetic differentiation.

### **Recent Events**

For recent events, the BRT’s scores consisted of single minus (–). These scores reflect an assessment that recent events, considered collectively, are likely to have an overall negative impact on long-term viability of the redstripe rockfish DPS. Harvest was mentioned as a past threat, although harvest has been eliminated in recent years. Recent pollution events were also cited. The effects of these recent positive and negative

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events are difficult to estimate; most members indicated that the net effect is likely to be negative.

### ***Qualitative Threats Assessment***

The results of the BRT's analysis of the severity of threats the redstripe rockfish DPS are presented in Table 28. Presented in the table are the median threat scores together with the standard deviation (SD) about the median threat scores. The BRT ranked low dissolved oxygen events, chemical contaminants, and nutrient loading as the most serious threat to persistence of the redstripe rockfish DPS. Overharvesting and by-catch were also ranked in the top four threats in the redstripe rockfish DPS. In some categories some portion of the BRT felt that insufficient data was available to score the threat severity (thereby marking the threat severity as "unknown").

### ***Overall Risk Summary***

Redstripe rockfish do not occur in the catch data from North Puget Sound. In Puget Sound Proper, however, redstripe rockfish appeared frequently in the recreational catch (between 1-14%) during 1980 to 1985. Previous to that, from 1965 to 1979, redstripe rockfish appeared much less frequently (< 1%). After 1985, the frequency of redstripe rockfish declined in the recreational data and since 1996, it does not appear in the catch data. A bag limit was imposed in 1983 and the bag limit was further reduced in 1994 and 2000. Since redstripe rockfish are smaller than other species, bag limits may lead to discarding and thus under-representation of redstripe rockfish in the recreational catch. In the 1980s and 1990s, redstripe rockfish appeared at a low frequency (< 1.5%) in the WDFW trawl survey. The frequency increased dramatically in 2002 and 2005, with redstripe rockfish making up 39 and 48% of the individuals caught. The BRT concluded these high estimates may be statistical outliers, however, and are not necessarily indicative of an actual increase in abundance in recent years. However, the biomass of redstripe rockfish in the Puget Sound trawls was significantly higher in 2008 than in 1995, indicating a potential increase in abundance. The BRT also noted that the presence of redstripe rockfish in the WDFW trawl survey indicates that redstripe rockfish are present in Puget Sound but are no longer being recorded in the dockside surveys of the recreational catch, for undetermined reasons. Overall, the BRT was concerned that the total abundance and trends in abundance for this species were not well known, but concluded that the available data indicated that the species was at least locally abundant with in Puget Sound. The BRT also noted that this species has a shorter generation time and higher intrinsic rate of productivity than many other rockfish species. The BRT noted that this species is not preferred by recreational anglers, and may therefore be less susceptible to overharvest. Because this species is also more of a habitat generalist than many other rockfish, the BRT was less concerned about risks from habitat loss or reduced diversity. The BRT did note that areas of low dissolved oxygen and chemical contamination are potential risk factors for this species. There was no evidence of size truncation in this species over time, but too few fish were measured in the later decades to provide a meaningful analysis. The BRT conclusions regarding the overall risk the DPS were weighted toward "not at risk" (52/90), with "moderate risk" receiving minority support (29/90) and "high risk" receiving little support (9/90).



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### ***“Significant Portion of its Range” Question***

The BRT concluded that the redstripe rockfish DPS is “not at risk” of extinction throughout all of its range and in effect answering the question in the negative as to “whether the redstripe rockfish DPS is at risk throughout a significant portion of its range.”

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## **Appendix A - Rockfish Historic Data Summary and Synthesis**

In general, both historic and more recent reports confirm that the five petitioned species are present in Puget Sound, although in different habitats and/or with various levels of susceptibility to particular types of sampling or fishing gear. Adult greenstriped and redstripe rockfish are found in deep water habitats over cobble or mud bottoms or in the water column; consequently they are more prevalent in trawl catches where this gear is utilized. Conversely, canary rockfish, bocaccio and yelloweye rockfish are generally associated with steep sidewalls or rocky untrawlable bottom, and are therefore more often observed by divers or caught in the recreational hook-and-line fishery. There is also some indication that individual species may be more abundant or prevalent in particular sub regions of Puget Sound.

The earliest accounts of Puget Sound's fish fauna are rarely quantitative, but do provide anecdotal accounts of species' relative abundance and reported locations of occurrence. Alternate common names often used in historic accounts are noted in Table 29.

Before European colonization of the region's native people harvested rockfish for consumption, although it was not an intensive fishery and there is little detailed information that documents or differentiates harvest of particular species. Coast Salish people in the San Juan archipelago regarded rockfish primarily as something you would line-fish for immediate consumption (pers. comm. Russell Barsh, Director of the Center for the Study of Coastal Salish Environments). In contrast, salmon and halibut were fished intensively in the islands for drying and trade. Places that were "famous" for rockfish include Deception Island (Deception Pass), Turn Point on Stuart Island, Iceberg Point on Lopez, and Point Disney and Point Hammond on Waldron Island. There are few reliable data sets that document rockfish consumption by native people in an archaeological context; most of this information is in the gray literature (R. Barsh, pers comm.). Very few archaeological sites in this area have been excavated and only very recently have archaeologists begun to identify fish bones systematically. Kopperl (2004) reviewed over 7,000 fish remains from Watmough Bight, Lopez Island, for the UW Burke Museum and Bureau of Land Management and was able to identify 2,450 of those bones at least to the Family level. Only four rockfish (family Scorpaenidae) bones were identified, while nearly 10 percent of the assemblage were greenlings (family Hexagrammidae). Watmough was a summer salmon fishing camp, and not surprisingly, the midden consisted mainly of salmon remains from large-scale cleaning, splitting, and drying operations.

Reviews of the fisheries from British Columbia and Washington at the turn of the century focused on "useful" saltwater fishes such as halibut and sturgeon, which figured prominently in the catch at the time (U.S. Fisheries Commission 1900). Rockfishes are not mentioned explicitly in these reports and are assumed to represent what the authors termed "a reserve stock [of saltwater species], which will be drawn upon more and more with the increase of local population". Almost two decades later, however, Trevor

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Kincaid (1919) acknowledged that the family Scorpaenidae constituted “one of the most important and valuable groups of fishes found on the Pacific Coast”. He produced an annotated list of Puget Sound fishes that documented thirteen species of rockfish that were known to inhabit Puget Sound, including two of the petitioned species: the “orange rockfish” (*S. pinniger*) that was “abundant in deep water”, and the “red rockfish or red snapper” (*S. ruberrimus*), the largest of this group, “common in deep water” and “brought to market in considerable quantities”.

Smith (1936) provided one of the first scientific reports on Puget Sound commercial fisheries focused on the fleet of otter trawlers which targeted flatfish landed for market in Seattle. The fishery occurred primarily over relatively soft-bottom areas, with twelve important fishing grounds identified in greater Puget Sound based on relative productivity. Seven rockfish species were indicated as being taken by this fishery, including three of the petitioned species “orange rockfish” (*Sebastes pinniger*), “red snapper” (*S. ruberrimus*), and “olive-banded rock cod” (*S. elongatus*).

Haw and Buckley’s (1971) text on saltwater fishing in Washington marine waters, including Puget Sound, was designed to popularize recreational sport (hook and line) fishing in the region to the general public. Increased recreational utilization of salmon and marine fish resources was needed to promote recognition of the needs of this fishery in management decisions that were historically driven by commercial fishery interests. Fishing locations and habitat preferences were indicated for three species of rockfish: canary, yelloweye, and bocaccio. Canary rockfish were found at depths over 150’ and were not restricted to rocky bottom areas. This species occurred in certain locations as far south as Pt Defiance and was taken in good numbers at Tacoma Narrows, but was considered more abundant in the San Juan Islands, north Puget Sound, and Strait of Juan de Fuca. Rockfish were found at depths over 150’ on rocky bottoms, and primarily occurred in north Puget Sound, the Strait, and the outer coast. Finally, bocaccio were frequently caught in the Tacoma Narrows. In person, Buckley’s retrospective assessment of rockfish distribution and abundance in the 1960’s is that the strong tidal currents and rocky, high vertical relief walls at Tacoma Narrows essentially represented a microcosm of marine fish found in the Neah Bay area. He noted that the Tacoma Narrows likely had almost “virgin assemblages” of bottomfish that received little fishing pressure except from occasional experienced recreational anglers and a small boat commercial fishery for lingcod (*Ophiodon elongatus*). The bottom habitat in the central Tacoma Narrows was difficult to fish because of the mass of cables and concrete remains from the Tacoma Narrows Bridge collapse in 1940. The recreational harvest of rockfish in Puget Sound and other inland marine waters increased when recreational fishing for these species was popularized and electronic depth sounders enhanced the ability of anglers to locate productive fishing locations. Buckley noted that WDFW worked with the media to teach the public to target bottomfish. In the Tacoma Narrows the rockfish resources declined once the mature assemblages of fish were removed. Buckley felt this was the result of a lack of a regular source of natural recruitment.

Two documents (Delacy et al. 1972, Miller and Borton 1980) compiled all available data on Puget Sound fish species distributions and relative number of

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occurrences since 1971/1973 from the literature (including some records noted above), fish collections, unpublished log records, and other sources. Twenty-seven representative of the family Scorpaenidae are listed in these documents, including all five species considered in this status review (total records indicated in parentheses): greenstriped rockfish (54): most records occur in Hood Canal, although also collected near Seattle, primarily associated with otter trawls; Bocaccio (110): most records occur from the 1970's in Tacoma Narrows and Appletree Cove (near Kingston) associated with sport catch; canary rockfish (114): most records occur from the 1960-70's in Tacoma Narrows, Hood Canal, San Juan Islands, Bellingham, and Appletree Cove associated with sport catch; redstripe rockfish (26): most records are from Hood Canal sport catch, although a few were also taken in Central Sound/Seattle; yelloweye rockfish (113): most records occur from the early 1970's in the San Juan Islands (Sucia Island) and Bellingham Bay associated with the sport catch.

Some research was conducted on the ecology and recreational exploitation of rockfish in Puget Sound during the 1970's and 1980's by several graduate students at the University of Washington's School of Fisheries (Moulton 1977, Barker 1979, Gowan 1983). Moulton (1977) developed SCUBA methods for surveying fish populations in the rocky nearshore region of northern Puget Sound (San Juan Islands) to estimate changes in biomass, density, and depth distribution for these species. Of the five species of interest, only one yelloweye rockfish was observed in the nearshore SCUBA surveys. Barker (1979) and Gowan (1983) focused on the most frequently-encountered recreational rockfish species: Copper, quillback, brown, black, and yellowtail rockfish. Barker's work, conducted in the San Juan Islands, does not mention any of the rockfish species being reviewed. Gowan collected rockfish specimens for age and growth analysis throughout Puget Sound from 1973-76 by hook-and-line (>1,100 specimens) and commercial landings at processors (<200 specimens). Although the majority of these species were represented by the more common species noted above, Gowan's (1983) records also include size at age records for canary rockfish (n=10, 303-401 mm TL), yelloweye rockfish (n=26, 430-707 mm TL), and bocaccio (n=23, 550-730 mm TL). Results of a subsequent creel census around Bainbridge Island during 1976-1977 yielded an additional 446 rockfish specimens, although only a single yelloweye rockfish specimen was enumerated from this effort.

Walton (1979) surveyed eight artificial reef (tire reefs) habitats and other structures with SCUBA for density and biomass of fish species from 1975-1978 near Edmonds, WA (Central Puget Sound). Over the course of the 213 survey dives 20,239 fishes were observed, including 5139 rockfishes comprising seven species. Bocaccio (n=10, 0.2% of rockfish, 2% frequency of occurrence) and greenstriped rockfish (n=26, 0.5% of rockfish, 5% frequency of occurrence) were the only two petitioned species observed during this study. Bocaccio were observed in a school of black rockfish swimming in the water column near a breakwater, whereas greenstriped rockfish were usually associated with cobble / rubble habitat or a concrete outfall block.

Reum's (2006) UW thesis used otter trawls at four depths (20-160 m) along the Central Basin of Puget Sound during 2004-2005 to describe seasonal and depth-related

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variation in feeding relationships of fish communities. Three of the rockfish species of interest were collected: *Sebastes elongatus*, *S. proriger*, and *S. ruberrimus*. *Sebastes elongatus* was encountered at 0.544 kg/km (3.977 individuals 1000m<sup>-2</sup>) during the summer at 80-m depth. *Sebastes proriger* was found at 0.055 kg/km (0.389 individuals 1000m<sup>-2</sup>) during the fall at 160-m depth and at 0.343 kg/km (3.398 individuals 1000m<sup>-2</sup>) during the summer at 80-m depth. *Sebastes ruberrimus* was found during the winter at 0.944 kg/km (0.853 individuals 1000m<sup>-2</sup>) at 160-m depth, and during the summer at 1.093 kg/km (1.879 individuals 1000m<sup>-2</sup>) at 80-m depth and 2.365 kg/km (1.027 individuals 1000m<sup>-2</sup>) at 160-m depth.

### **Supplemental fishery-independent data**

Besides the historic studies described above, there are several sources of fishery independent data that have been collected for more extended periods of time. Most of these studies utilized a bottom trawl to collect demersal fishes over the past 25 years. Because of the affinity of canary rockfish, yelloweye rockfish and bocaccio for untrawlable habitat, trawls are ineffective at sampling abundance of these species. However, information about presence /absence was considered valuable by the BRT when it was considered with the quantitative information provided in the body of the status review.

Tim Essington (University of WA, personal communication) recently summarized unpublished data from the logbooks of University of Washington research vessels, consisting primarily of otter trawls conducted from 1948 to 1978 throughout Puget Sound. All five of the petitioned rockfish species occur in the species list of this effort. Of the more than 1000 trawls (n=1063) for which there was deemed sufficient documentation, the relative occurrence, % frequency of occurrence, and total number individuals (respectively) of each species was as follows: greenstriped (8, 0.75%, 22), bocaccio (3, 0.28%, 3), canary (3, 0.28%, 3), redstripe (4, 0.38%, 5), and yelloweye rockfish (3, 0.28%, 4). Additional analysis of spatial and temporal patterns of occurrence is warranted; for example, all records of *S. elongatus* occurred before 1959, with centers of abundance in Hood Canal and the Central basin of Puget Sound.

The Puget Sound Ambient Monitoring Program (PSAMP) is a multi-agency effort to monitor the health of Puget Sound and assess the status and trends of chemical contamination in Puget Sound fish and macro-invertebrates (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/psamp/>). In the period covering 1989 through 2001 marine or anadromous fish species were collected by trawl from over 100 stations from Puget Sound and southern Georgia Basin, with special focus on highly contaminated urban embayments. Samples from these trawls have included greenstriped (n=14), redstripe (n=17), and yelloweye rockfish (n=4) (J. West, WDFW, Personal communication, 5/2/08).

### **Fishery dependent data**

Palsson et al. (2008) provide a comprehensive overview of the management history, catch statistics, and fishery landing trends of rockfishes in Puget Sound. Below,

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we highlight aspects of this report that have direct bearing on the five petitioned rockfish species. We supplement this with additional information to provide additional context for the analyses present in the body of the status review.

### **Management history**

The history of management of Puget Sound rockfish lends insight into the trajectory of rockfish landings in Puget Sound and the transition of the fishery from commercial to recreational. Regulation and management of this fishery has always been based on “rockfish”, as a group, and until very recently, has not differentiated between different species and their life history, behavior, or ecology. Rockfish were harvested at relatively low levels by a small Puget Sound trawl fishery from perhaps the 1880’s to the 1960’s (Holmberg et al. 1967; Palsson et al. 2008). Trawl fisherman did not specifically target rockfish populations, which were marketed seasonally, considered “scattered throughout Puget Sound”, and principally comprised of copper (*S. caurinus*), quillback (*S. maliger*), and orange (*S. pinniger*) rockfish species (Holmberg et al. 1967). In fact, management of rockfish in Puget Sound received little attention until the 1970’s, when Puget Sound fisheries were expanded and publicized to reduce social and economic stress from 1) displacement of Washington-based vessels from Canadian waters with Canada’s extended jurisdiction over marine waters, and 2) the reduction in salmon-fishing opportunities by non-treaty fisheries from the 1974 Boldt decision (Palsson et al. 2008). By the 1980’s, rockfish were recognized as an important recreational and commercial species in Puget Sound and were actively managed to favor recreational fisheries in South Sound. Comprehensive groundfish plans were written by WDFW (Pedersen and DiDonato 1982, Pedersen and Bargmann 1986) and summarized what was then known about some of the most prominent groundfish species, including bocaccio, canary, and yelloweye rockfish. These plans emerged as a response to diminished catch trends, competition between user groups, and growth in the recreational fishery. The first bag limit reductions were instituted in 1983 and bottom trawling was banned south of Admiralty Inlet in 1984. By the 1990’s signs of rockfish population decline were evident, more bag limit reductions were put in place, and a variety of commercial gears (trawl roller gear, bottomfish jig and troll gear) were banned in North Sound. By 2000, recreational rockfish bag limits were reduced to one fish in Puget Sound, commercial gear limits were expanded, and catch prohibitions instituted for yelloweye and canary rockfish throughout Washington’s inside waters (Palsson et al. 2008)(Pedchenko 2005).

### **Landings trends.**

Commercial rockfish landings have been documented since the 1920’s by WDFW in the form of tax receipts or landing tickets (Palsson et al. 2008), whereas recreational landings have been estimated by dockside surveys since 1965 (Buckley 1967). Recreational harvests have typically exceeded commercial catch in each region and year since combined landings have been estimated. These trends are described in Palsson et al. (2008) and briefly summarized here. In general, annual rockfish landings remained under 20,000 lbs before the 1940’s, rose during World War II when harvests peaked at over 375,000 lbs, then fluctuated between 50,000 and 220,000 lbs until 1970 (Palsson et al. 2008). After 1970 total rockfish harvest generally mirrored fishing effort. Harvests gradually increased after 1970 when recreational fishing effort increased and

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this catch was incorporated into total landings estimates. By the mid-1970's total rockfish harvest had increased to over 300,000 lbs per year and peaked at almost 900,000 lbs in 1980. Annual harvest fluctuated between 48,000 lbs and 300,000 lbs between 1981 and 1991, declined below 30,000 lbs during the 1990's, and reached a low of approximately 2,600 lbs in 2003.

### **Harvest Details and Data Shortcomings**

As the nature of the rockfish harvest has changed through time, so has the availability of particular types of biological information for later analysis. Some of the earliest reported commercial landings in Puget Sound from 1935 to 1964 are published in annual fishery reports (Washington State 1964) although they share the common weakness that precise catch location and effort is not indicated, and these landings estimates are probably dominated by rockfish caught on the outer coast or in Canada. In the Puget Sound commercial fishery, bottom trawling accounted for the majority of recorded annual harvest of rockfish, averaging 84% of the total catch since 1955 (Palsson et al. 2008). Commercial fishing effort (e.g., hours trawling) is not available before 1955 (Holmberg et al. 1967, Schmitt et al. 1991, PMFC 1979 unpublished data series). Furthermore, rockfish have never been distinguished by species in the commercial fishery, likely due to difficulties in differentiating between the many similar species and the irrelevance of this information to the processors and market. Rather, rockfish are considered as a group which includes all commercially retained red and black rockfish except Pacific Ocean perch (*Sebastes alutus*). As a result, there are no historic landing trends of individual rockfish species and there are no size data. Because commercial harvest only includes landed catch, the amount of rockfish bycatch that was discarded is unknown, but it is thought to be small relative to the landed portion.

After 1970, commercial groundfish catch, effort, and value statistics are documented in Puget Sound by sub region, but there are still very few discrete estimates of rockfish catch composition or size (Schmitt et al. 1991). For example, although Schmitt et al. (1991) provide 1970-1988 catch information on three of the petitioned species: bocaccio, yelloweye, and canary rockfish, these numbers were derived from percent composition estimates made in 1984 (derived from Pedersen and Bargmann 1986) that were later applied to "all rockfish" landings. The rare species composition estimates that do exist show that some gears were selective on particular species in some areas. For example, the 1984 percent species composition estimates show that approximately 70% of the rockfish catch (by weight) was represented by bocaccio in the set net fishery of the Central and South Sound regions and 20% by yelloweye rockfish in the San Juan region. Set lines were similarly effective for catching bocaccio in Hood Canal (30% of rockfish catch by weight) and South Sound (50%), and for yelloweye rockfish in Juan de Fuca (50%) and Hood Canal (30%). Rockfish species composition estimates made in 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991-2, and 1993-2003 (Palsson et al. 2008) showed similar trends by commercial gear type.

Historic estimates of recreational catch present a number of challenges to interpretation because of relatively low or unequal sampling effort in time and space, large increments of unidentified and possibly misidentified rockfish, dependence on the

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recreational salmon fishery, and lack of diver, shore and pier angler data. Estimates of rockfish recreational harvest by boat-based anglers were begun in 1965 (Buckley 1967, 1968, 1970; Bargman 1977), but subsequent documents (e.g., Palsson 1987; Palsson et al. 2008) do not use data before 1970 because of the previously mentioned shortcomings. The recreational data does provide some of the only historic information on rockfish species composition and size in Puget Sound, although there are some disagreements in the reported data. As an example, sport catches published from 1975-1986 by Washington Department of Fisheries (1975-1986) show that bocaccio were harvested primarily from south Puget Sound (PCA 13) at rates of greater than 1000 fish year<sup>-1</sup> from 1976-1982, including more than 7500 bocaccio caught in 1977. In comparison, the estimated catch of bocaccio presented by Palsson (1987) during the same years exceeds 1000 bocaccio year<sup>-1</sup> in only 1977 (1128 fish). These differences are attributed to (unpublished) algorithms Palsson (1987) used to correct species composition data collected before 1980 using “reliable” MRFSS estimates. WDFW rockfish species composition and catch data has been considered reliable since 2004 (Palsson et al 2008); bocaccio are not noted as part of the recreational catch in these years.

Rockfish size data from Puget Sound are rare, even when compared to the notably infrequent species composition data. Of the data that exist, most has been collected via recreational creel surveys conducted by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) or the federal Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey (MRFSS) since 1980. However, there are a handful of records reaching into the mid-1970’s.

### **Other fishery details**

Individual reports provide further insight into how the commercial fishery evolved and declined over time guided by market demand, technological advances, and management actions (Heyamoto et al. 1959, Holmberg et al. 1961, Holmberg et al. 1967). Geographically, the trawl fishery was often divided into two distinct groups: an “outside” or ocean fishery which included the Washington coast and waters off Vancouver Island, and a local or “inside” Puget Sound fishery which included catches of everything inside of a line extending north of Cape Flattery (PMFC catch area 4A; Washington statistical area 18) (Heyamoto et al. 1959). Catches from the outside fishery predominated and the bulk of all Washington trawl landings were made up of ten major species (groups): Petrale sole, English sole, Dover sole, rock sole, starry flounder, Pacific cod, lingcod, sablefish, rockfish, and Pacific Ocean perch. The principal species comprising the rockfish catch in the outer coast included *S. brevispinis*, *S. pinniger*, *S. flavidus*, *S. rubrivinctus*, and *S. diploproa* (Holmberg et al. 1961).

The “inside” Puget Sound trawl fishery from 1955 to 1964 was exploited by about 50 vessels designed for a variety of fishing strategies (gillnet, set net, purse seine, etc.). Most trawl fishing inside Puget Sound occurred in the winter and early spring when fishermen were not harvesting salmon or halibut; consequently rockfish demand was greatest, prices were higher, and targeted effort likely increased when fresh fish such as salmon and halibut were scarce (Holmberg et al. 1961). The principal species taken by the trawl fishery during these years were Pacific cod, English sole, and starry flounder (Table 30). Trawl fisherman did not specifically target rockfish, which were principally



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comprised of copper (*S. caurinus*), quillback (*S. maliger*), and orange (*S. pinniger*) rockfish (Holmberg et al. 1967). Rockfish populations were considered “scattered throughout Puget Sound”, and annual landings averaged less than 100,000 lb, a level considered rather insignificant (Holmberg et al. 1967, Table 30). In fact, Puget Sound rockfish catches generally increased from 1955-1959, but catch rates remained below 20-lb/hr in most years, almost 5 times lower than the next most productive coastal region, leading the authors to conjecture that “this is all the inside waters are capable of producing” (Heyamoto et al. 1959).

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## **Appendix B - Geological and Climatic History of Puget Sound**

The greater Puget Sound Basin falls within the Puget Lowland, a portion of a low-lying area extending from the lower Fraser River Valley southward to the Willamette Lowland (Burns 1985). In the distant past, the Puget Lowland was drained by numerous small rivers that flowed northward from the Cascade and Olympic mountains and emptied into an earlier configuration of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. During the Pleistocene, massive Piedmont glaciers, as much as 1,100 m thick, moved southward from the Coast Mountains of British Columbia and carved out the Strait of Juan de Fuca and greater Puget Sound. The deepest basins were created in North Puget Sound in and around the San Juan Islands. About 15,000 years ago, the southern tongue of the last glacier receded rapidly leaving the lowland covered with glacial deposits and glacial lakes, and revealing the Puget Sound Basin (Burns 1985). The large glacially-formed troughs of Puget Sound were initially occupied by large proglacial lakes that drained southward (Thorson 1980). Almost two dozen deltas were developed in these lakes as the result of streams flowing from the melting ice margins.

Important changes have occurred in the Puget Sound region in the past century, and the next several decades will very likely see even greater changes (Mote et al. 2005). Glaciers in the Cascade and Olympic Mountains have been retreating since the 1850s. Since the late 1800s, Pacific Northwest temperatures rose faster than the global average. Puget Sound waters have warmed substantially, especially in the period since the early 1970s, when the sea surface temperature at Race Rocks in the Strait of Juan de Fuca began a prolonged warming trend that continued through the present (Sound Science 2007).

Considerable evidence indicates that climate in the greater Puget Sound region is cyclical, with maxima (warm, dry periods) and minima (cold, wet periods) occurring at decadal intervals. For example, the Pacific Northwest Index (PNI) indicates that since 1893 there have been about five temperature minima and four maxima (Ebbesmeyer and Strickland 1995). Three minima occurred between 1893 and 1920, one between the mid-1940s and 1960, and one between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s. Two maxima occurred between the early-1920s and the early-1940s, and two more occurred between the late-1970s and 1997.

Mantua et al. (1997) and Hare and Mantua (2000) evaluated relationships between interdecadal climate variability and fluctuations in the abundance and distribution of marine biota. The PDO shows predominantly warmer periods between 1925 and 1946 and following 1977, and a cooler phase between 1947 and 1976 (Figure 40). For Washington State, warmer periods are characterized by increased flow of relatively warm-humid air and less than normal precipitation, and the cool phase correspond to a cool-wet climate. Mantua et al. (1997) reported connections between the PDO and indicators of populations of Alaskan sockeye and pink salmon and Washington-Oregon-California coho and Chinook salmon, although the coho and Chinook populations were highest during the negative epochs. Hare and Mantua (2000) found evidence for major

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ecological and climate changes during the warm period following 1977 (Figure 40). They also found weak evidence for a shift to a cooler regime following 1989. In particular they noted that a number of ecological parameters were correlated with this decadal-scale climate variability. These included annual catches of Alaskan coho and sockeye salmon, annual catches of Washington and Oregon coho and Chinook salmon, biomass of zooplankton in the California Current, and the Oyster Condition Index for oysters in Willapa Bay, Washington (Hare and Mantua 2000).

Proxies of climatic variation have been used to reconstruct temperature fluctuations in the Pacific Northwest. Graumlich and Brubaker (1986) reported correlations between annual growth records for larch and hemlock trees located near Mt. Rainier and temperature and snow depth. A regression model was used to reconstruct temperatures from 1590 to 1913, and their major findings were that temperatures prior to 1900 were approximately 1°C lower than those of the 1900s, and that only the temperature pattern in the late-1600s resembled that of the 1900s.

As a consequence of regional warming in the 20th century, spring time snow pack has decreased markedly at many sites in Puget Sound, and the timing of river and stream flow has shifted with significant reductions in snowmelt runoff in May-July, reduced summer stream flows, and increased runoff in late winter and early spring (Sound Science 2007). Projections for the consequences of future global warming in the Puget Sound region include: continued rise of air and marine water temperatures, altered river and stream flows, increase of winter runoff with decrease in water stored as snow pack, increased river flooding, and continued sea level rise (NMFS 2007). Related consequences to Puget Sound will likely consist of changes to water quality, circulation patterns, biological productivity, habitat distributions, populations of sensitive species, rates of harmful algal blooms, surface wind patterns, and coastal upwelling regimes.

## **Appendix C - Marine Species in Greater Puget Sound**

### **Primary producers**

The major classes of primary producers in Puget Sound are phytoplankton, sediment-associated micro algae, and rooted or attached algae and vascular plants in the Sound, freshwater, and on land (NMFS 2007). Phytoplankton production in Puget Sound occurs in both nearshore and offshore marine waters. Pelagic phytoplankton in Puget Sound is mainly composed of two major groups: diatoms and dinoflagellates, with diatoms accounting for most of the biomass (Strickland 1983). Some single-celled algae or diatoms adhere to benthic substrates or are motile within sediments.

Algal productivity in the open waters of the central basin of Puget Sound proper is dominated by intense but patchy blooms of micro algae beginning in late April or May, with a series of intermittent bloom through the summer, and perhaps another intense bloom in the fall (Strickland 1983). Annual primary productivity in the central basin of the Sound is about 465 g C/m<sup>2</sup>. This high productivity is due to intensive upward transport of nitrate by the estuarine mechanism and tidal mixing. Chlorophyll concentrations rarely exceed 15 µg/L. There is frequently more chlorophyll below the photic zone than within it. Winter et al. (1975) concluded that phytoplankton growth was limited by a combination of factors, including vertical advection and turbulence, light, sinking and occasional rapid horizontal advection of the phytoplankton from the area by sustained winds. Summer winds from the northwest would be expected to transport phytoplankton to the south end of the Sound which could exacerbate the anthropogenic effects that are already evident in some of these inlets and bays (Harrison et al. 1994).

When estuarine and marine macrophytes die or senesce (or terrestrial plant material is washed in), they are colonized by microbes, including bacteria, protists, and fungi, that break down and transform the organic matter into detritus that can be used again by producers (NMFS 2007). Detritus also encompasses molts from crustaceans and other animals, fecal pellets, and other animal-related sources. This consumer pathway is a very important trophic pathway in the nearshore areas and deep benthic habitats of Puget Sound (Mumford 2007).

### **Zooplankton**

The abundance and distribution of zooplankton in greater Puget Sound is generally not well understood. Vertical migration on both daily and seasonal cycles dominates the vertical distribution of most large zooplankton species, which are observed near the surface at night and at depths approaching 200-m during the day (Strickland 1983). A few field surveys have been conducted in selected inlets and waterways, but reports on Sound-wide surveys are lacking. In general, the most numerically abundant zooplankton throughout the greater Puget Sound region are the calanoid copepods, especially *Pseudocalanus* spp. (Giles and Cordell 1998, Dumbauld 1985, Chester et al. 1980, Ohman 1990). Giles and Cordell (1998) reported that crustaceans (primarily calanoid copepods) were most abundant in Budd Inlet in South Puget Sound, although larvae of larvaceans, cnidarians, and polychaetes in varying numbers were also abundant

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during the year. In a similar study, conducted by Dumbauld (1985) at two locations in the Main Basin (a site near downtown Seattle and a cluster of sites in the East Passage near Seattle covering a variety of depths from 12 to 220 m), Dumbauld found that calanoid copepods and cyclopoid copepods, and two species of larvaceans were dominant numerically. Dominant copepods at deeper sites were *Pseudocalanus* spp. and *Corycaeus anglicus*. The larvacean, *Oikopleura dioica*, was also relatively common at the shallow sites. Similarly, the most abundant zooplankton in the Strait of Juan de Fuca were reported by Chester et al. (1980) to be calanoid copepods, including *Pseudocalanus* spp. and *Acartia longiremis*, and the cyclopoid copepod, *Oithona similis*.

It is likely that zooplankton assemblages vary both seasonally and annually. Evidence of depth-specific differences was reported by Ohman (1990). In studies conducted in Dabob Bay near Hood Canal, Ohman (1999) compared the abundance of certain zooplankton species at a shallow and deep site. Ohman (1999) found one species of copepod (*Pseudocalanus newmani*) that was common at both sites, whereas species (e.g., *Euchaeta elongata* and *Euphausia pacifica*) that prey upon *P. newmani* were abundant at the deep site, but virtually absent from the shallow site. An example of seasonal variability was reported by Bollens et al. (1992b). In Dabob Bay, *E. pacifica* larvae were abundant in the spring and absent in the winter, and juveniles and adults were most abundant in the summer and early fall, with their numbers declining in the winter (Bollens et al. 1992b).

### **Benthic Invertebrates**

A few Sound-wide surveys of abundance and distribution of benthic invertebrates have been performed (Lie 1974, Llansó et al. 1998). A common finding among these surveys is that certain species prefer specific sediment types. For example, in areas with predominantly sandy sediments, among the most common species are *Axinopsida serricata* (a bivalve) and *Prionospio jubata* (a polychaete). In muddy-clay areas of mean to average depth, *Amphiodia urtica-periercta* (a echinoderm) and *Eudorella pacifica* (a cumacean) are among the most common species. In areas with mixed mud and sand, *Axinopsida serricata* and *Aphelochaeta* sp. (a polychaete) are commonly found. And lastly, in deep muddy, clayey areas, predominant species tend to be *Macoma carlottensis* (a bivalve) and *Pectinaria californiensis* (a polychaete). In general, areas with sandy sediments tend to have the most species (Llansó et al. 1998), but the lowest biomass (Lie 1974). Areas with mixed sediments tend to have the highest biomass (Lie 1974).

As with zooplankton, assemblages of benthic invertebrates vary both seasonally and annually. Lie (1968) reported seasonal variations in the abundance of species, with the maxima taking place during July-August, and the minima occurring in January to February. However, there were no significant variations in the number of species during different seasons. Annual variation was examined by Nichols (1988) at three Puget Sound proper sites in the Main Basin: two deep sites (200-250 m) and one shallow site (35 m). For one of the deep sites, he reported that *M. carlottensis* generally dominated the benthic community from 1963 through the mid-1970s. Subsequently, these species were largely replaced by *A. serricata*, *E. pacifica*, *P. californiensis*, *Ampharete acutifrons* (a polychaete), and *Euphiomedes producta* (an ostracod). A similar dominance by *P.*

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*californensis* and *A. acutifrons* was reported for the other deep site over approximately the same time period.

Several macro invertebrate species are widely distributed in greater Puget Sound are of high ecological, economic, cultural, and recreational value (Dethier 2006). Among crustaceans, Dungeness crab (*Cancer magister*) and several species of shrimp (e.g., sidestripe [*Pandalopsis dispar*] and pink [*Pandalus borealis*]) are the most commonly harvested invertebrate species (Bourne and Chew 1994). The non-indigenous Pacific oyster (*Crassostrea gigas*) accounts for approximately 90% of the landings of bivalves. Other abundant bivalves are the Pacific littleneck clam (*Protothaca staminea*), Pacific geoduck (*Panopea abrupta*), Pacific gaper (*Tresus nuttallii*), and the non-indigenous Japanese littleneck clam (*Tapes philippinarum*) and softshell clam (*Mya arenaria*) (Kozloff 1987, Turgeon et al. 1988).

### Fish

Over 200 species of fish have been recorded in the Georgia Basin and greater Puget Sound (Schmitt et al. 1994, Palsson et al. 1997). The marine species are generally categorized as forage fish, bottomfish, and other non-game fishes. Many are, or have been, considered important commercial species, including Pacific herring (*Clupea pallasii*), spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*), Pacific hake (*Merluccius productus*), Pacific cod (*Gadus macrocephalus*), walleye pollock (*Theragra chalcogramma*), lingcod (*Ophiodon elongatus*), rockfish (*Sebastes* spp.), and English sole (*Pleuronectes vetulus*).

Forage fishes are small, schooling fishes that are key prey items for larger predatory fish and wildlife in a marine food web (Pentilla 2007). Forage fish are a valuable indicator of the health and productivity of the marine environment, and in turn are reliant upon a variety of shallow nearshore and estuarine habitats (Lemberg et al. 1997). The major forage fish species in nearshore waters of Puget Sound include Pacific herring, surf smelt (*Hypomesus pretiosus*), and sand lance (*Ammodytes hexapterus*), all three of which lay eggs in shallow, intertidal vegetated or sand-gravel beach habitats (Pentilla 2007). Pacific herring stocks in Puget Sound have recently undergone federal listing reviews (Stout et al. 2001; Gustafson et al. 2006).

Bottomfish live in marine waters and spend their lives near or on the bottom; bottomfish species commonly found in Puget Sound include the true cods (Pacific cod, walleye pollock, and Pacific hake), lingcod, flatfish, and rockfish (Palsson 1997). Populations of several stocks, particularly Pacific cod and hake, are at historic lows in Puget Sound (Gustafson et al. 2000). More than 20 species of rockfish inhabit Puget Sound (West 1997), with copper (*Sebastes caurinus*), quillback (*S. maliger*), and brown rockfish (*S. auriculatus*) considered three of the most common species (Palsson et al. 2008). These three rockfish species have also recently undergone a status review for federal listing (Stout et al. 2001). The spiny dogfish is a slow-growing long-lived species of shark found throughout the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound (Schmitt et al. 1994, Palsson 1997). English sole are the dominant member of the flatfish community in Puget Sound and stocks are considered relatively healthy throughout most of Puget Sound

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(Palsson 1997). However, significant declines have been recorded in localized embayments, such as Bellingham Bay and Discovery Bay, and high levels of toxic contaminants have been measured in the tissues of individuals collected from urban embayments (West et al. 2001).

Other species of bottomfish species found throughout greater Puget Sound include skates (*Raja rhina* and *R. binoculata*), spotted ratfish (*Hydrolagus cooliei*), sablefish (*Anoplopoma fimbria*), greenlings (*Hexagrammos decagrammus* and *H. stelleri*), sculpins (e.g., cabezon [*Scorpaenichthys marmoratus*], Pacific staghorn sculpin [*Leptocottus armatus*], and roughback sculpin [*Chitonotus pugetensis*]), surfperches (e.g., pile perch [*Rhacochilus vacca*] and striped seaperch [*Embiotoca lateralis*]), wolf-eel (*Anarrhichthys ocellatus*), and flatfishes (Pacific halibut [*Hippoglossus stenolepis*], Pacific sanddab [*Citharichthys sordidus*], butter sole [*Pleuronectes isolepis*], rock sole [*Pleuronectes bilineatus*], Dover sole [*Microstomus pacificus*], starry flounder [*Platichthys stellatus*], and sand sole [*Psetichthys melanostictus*]) (DeLacy et al. 1972, Robins et al. 1991). Additional fish species that are less known, but widely distributed in greater Puget Sound, include plainfin midshipman (*Porichthys notatus*), eelpouts (e.g., blackbelly eelpout [*Lycodopsis pacifica*]), pricklebacks (e.g., snake prickleback, [*Lumpenus sagitta*]), gunnels (e.g., penpoint gunnel [*Apodichthys flavidus*]), bay goby (*Lepidogobius lepidus*), and poachers (e.g., sturgeon poacher [*Podothecus acipenserinus*]) (DeLacy et al. 1972, Robins et al. 1991).

Several species of Pacific salmon use greater Puget Sound during some portion of their life cycle. These include chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), coho (*O. kisutch*), chum (*O. keta*), pink (*O. gorbuscha*), and sockeye salmon (*O. nerka*). Anadromous steelhead (*O. mykiss*) and cutthroat trout (*O. clarki clarki*) also reside in greater Puget Sound habitats. All juvenile salmon move along the shallows of estuaries and nearshore areas during their out migration to the sea, and may be found in these habitats throughout the year depending on species, stock, and life history stage (Fresh 2007).

### **Birds and mammals**

About 66,000 marine birds breed in or near greater Puget Sound, with about 70% of them breeding on Protection Island, located just outside of the northern entrance to the Sound (Wahl et al. 2005, Buchanan 2007). The most abundant species are rhinoceros auklet (*Cerorhinca monocerata*), glaucous-winged gull (*Larus glaucescens*), pigeon guillemot (*Cepphus columba*), cormorants (*Phalacrocorax* spp.), marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*), and the Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*). Examples of less abundant species include common murre (*Uria aalge*) and tufted puffins (*Fratercula cirrhata*). A number of additional bird species use greater Puget Sound during the winter months. Dabbling ducks, including American wigeon (*Anas americana*), mallard ducks (*A. platyrhynchos*) and northern pintail (*A. acuta*), are the most common, followed by geese and swans, such as trumpeter swans (*Cygnus columbianus*), tundra swans (*C. columbianus*), and Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*) (Mahaffy et al. 1994). The surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*) is one of the more abundant diving ducks in Puget Sound



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and a conspicuous member of the waterfowl community in open marine waters of western Washington (Buchanan 2007).

Populations of rhinoceros auklet and pigeon guillemot appear to be stable, whereas populations of glaucous-winged gull have increased slightly in recent years, especially in urban areas (Mahaffy et al. 1994). Accurate estimates of current populations of marbled murrelet and the Canada goose are not available, but the population of marbled murrelet has been greatly reduced and this species has been listed as threatened. Thirty years ago, year-round resident Canada geese were rare, but current anecdotal evidence from observations in waterfront parks suggests that their population is growing rapidly. The common murre and tufted puffin populations have declined drastically during the last two decades. Surveys have also documented a 58% reduction in density indices of all three scoter species (combined) from 1978-1979 to the mid-1990's (Nysewander et al. 2005). Human activity affects the taxonomic composition of marine bird assemblages across greater Puget Sound, and such changes can be detected at a variety of spatial scales with simple measures of taxonomic composition and urbanization (Rice 2007).

Nine primary marine mammal species occur in greater Puget Sound including (listed in order of abundance): harbor seal (*Phoca vitulina*), California sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*), Steller sea lion (*Eumetopias jubatus*), Northern elephant seal (*Mirounga angustirostris*), harbor porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*), Dall's porpoise (*Phocoenoides dalli*), killer whale (*Orcinus orca*), gray whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*), and minke whale (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*) (Calambokidis and Baird 1994).

Harbor seals are year-round residents, and their abundance has been increasing in greater Puget Sound since the late 1970's (Jeffries et al. 2000; Jeffries et al. 2003). California sea lions, primarily males, reside in greater Puget Sound between late summer and late spring, and spend the remainder of the year at their breeding grounds in southern California and Baja California. Populations of the remaining species are quite low in greater Puget Sound. Steller sea lions and elephant seals are transitory residents that are occasionally seen in Puget Sound. The Steller sea lion is currently listed as threatened in the U.S. whereas the elephant seal is considered abundant in the eastern North Pacific.

Although harbor porpoises are also abundant in the eastern North Pacific and were common in greater Puget Sound 50 or more years ago, they are now rarely seen in the Sound (Calambokidis and Baird 1994). Low numbers of Dall's porpoise are observed in greater Puget Sound throughout the year, but little is known about their population size; they are also abundant in the North Pacific. Resident and transient populations of killer whale are occasionally observed in small pods of 3 to 40 individuals throughout Puget Sound (Kriete 2007). Southern residents feed primarily on salmon and other fishes, whereas transient feed primarily on marine mammals. Southern residents are primarily found in Northern Puget Sound and size of this group has been estimated at between 70-100 individuals since the 1970's. The southern resident population declined 20% from 1996 to 2001 (Krahn et al. 2004) and was listed under the endangered species act in 2005. The causes of this decline are likely to include a combination of factors, including

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exposure to chemical contaminants, reduced availability of prey resources, and increased human activities (Krahn et al. 2004). Minke whales are also primarily observed in this same northern area, but their population size is unknown. Gray whales migrate past the Georgia Basin en route to or from their feeding or breeding grounds; a few of them enter greater Puget Sound during the spring through fall to feed.

## **Appendix D - Issues pertaining to the species composition data**

### **Washington State Sport Catch Reports (1975-1986)**

The data from these reports total bottomfish catch by hook-and-line by punch card area. The data are presented by species and include all five species of rockfish in the petition. The report does not include catch by divers or shore/pier anglers). No information is provided on the methods by which the numbers were derived, however we assume that data are derived from punch card catches as data >1980 are adjusted downward to account for statistical bias from methodology (as is done in other reports working with punch card data). No distinction is made between bottomfish specific vs. bottomfish catches incidental to salmon fishery. In many years, some punch card areas are listed with only 2 or 3 rockfish species with no listing for “other rockfishes”, whereas the same areas have many more species in later surveys. This suggests that data were recorded on species in idiosyncratically and inconsistently. The large amount of noise in the frequency data suggests the same. Note that harvest numbers of some species (e.g., bocaccio and canary rockfish) are much higher than in any subsequent published reports.

### **Bargmann (1977) and Buckley (1967, 1968, 1970)**

These reports summarize bottomfish specific and incidental (salmon angler) catch of bottomfish in catch areas 4-12 by month in 1965-73 using punch card data. The total catch estimates are derived from formulas used to estimate bottomfish angler effort and catch from the more thorough sampling done for the salmon fishery. The data cover only hook and line catch and do not cover dock, jetty, or shore anglers. The species data shows many of the same patterns seen in the Washington State Sport Catch Reports, which suggests that species reporting was not being done in a consistent fashion from year to year or punch card area to area. Indeed, the authors note that positive identification of individual rockfish species is spotty in some areas and often noted as “Rockfish”. However the “Rockfish” category was not consistently reported every year. The reports include all five species in the petition, although this varies greatly between years and catch record areas.

### **Palsson, W. A. (1988)**

This publication is a comprehensive summary of catch data from 1970-1985 and includes all the petitioned species (except greenstriped and redstripe rockfish, which were presumably pooled into misc/unidentified rockfish). The publication includes data previously published by Bargmann (Bargmann, 1977). The “Estimation Procedures” section of the publication reviews the many limitations of Puget Sound data, including relatively low sampling percentages (as compared to coastal fisheries), large increments of unidentified rockfish, and dependence of total catch estimates on expansion factors from the recreational salmon fishery. As in previous publications, the estimates do not include catch by divers, shore and pier anglers. Catch estimates since 1981 for catch areas 5-13 were adjusted downward by multiplying 0.833 following previously established punch card methodology to correct for the assumed bias of 20% in the punch card samples. Species composition data reported from WDFW dockside samplers were

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modified using species compositions from the MRFSS sampling data, when available, because these were considered more reliable. The corrections involved identifications pooled over six years of survey data. These species composition correction factors are not included in the document.

**Palsson, W.A., T. Tsou, G.G. Bargmann, R.M. Buckley, J.E. West, M.L. Mills, Y.W. Cheng, and R.E. Pacunski. Draft document (2008).**

This publication is a comprehensive review of the history, data sources, research, management, trends, and conservation efforts associated with rockfish resources in Puget Sound. Recreational rockfish catch by species (including all petitioned species except Bocaccio) is presented from 2004-2007 in terms of pounds of fish harvested or released in two major management regions (north and south Puget Sound). The text provides a summary of species composition information that highlights range of reliable species composition information for recreational species, and also includes some discussion of MRFSS data collection procedures (see below), with graphs of MRFSS species composition by north and south Puget Sound management regions (See specifically Figures 6.9 and 6.10 in Palsson et al (2008)); the five petitioned species are presumably pooled into “other rockfish” category.

Species composition estimates from commercial fisheries are presented by Palsson et al (2008) (Specifically see Tables 6.1 and 6.2 in Palsson (2008)). This includes the 1970-1986 observations described in Pedersen and Bargmann (1986) (and used in Schmitt et al. (1991)). The tables also include subsequent observations from 1988, 1989, 1991, and 1993, when the last commercial rockfish compositions were taken. Information on the sample sizes and distribution of these samples is not given.

**Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey (MRFSS)**

This is a federal survey occurring in Washington State from 1980-86, 1989, and 1996-2002 that used telephone and creel surveys to estimate state-wide catch and effort for boat and shore-based recreational fisheries, including harvest by SCUBA divers. It also estimated released and discarded catch, and entails extensive training of samplers in marine species identification. The MRFSS survey catch estimates for bottomfish are notably different than the estimates of the WDFW survey that were derived using salmon fishery data. This may be associated with the collection of fewer interviews and difficulties in apportioning harvest by coast/Puget Sound. We have not yet been able to review these data extensively for the BRT.

**WDFW trawl survey data. Palsson et al. (2008)**

These data provide catch records, biological data, and trawl effort/location from annual surveys throughout Puget Sound from 1987-2008 (>1500 trawls). The data includes records for four species of the petitioned species (no bocaccio), including biological records (length/weight info) for canary rockfish (n=25), greenstriped (n=481), redstripe (n=484), and Yelloweye (n= 10) rockfish. Effort is distributed unevenly at various levels over all geographic areas over time. This complicates temporal density/abundance trend estimation of some species. In addition, the sample sizes are low relative to the infrequent and clumped occurrence of the petitioned species. This leads to high sensitivity to outliers. Specifically, the high redstripe rockfish estimates in recent

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years are driven by outlier trawls (single trawl samples with high numbers of redstripe rockfish).

**Schmitt, C., S. Quinnell, M. Rickey, and M. Stanley (1991)**

This source contains commercially trawled species weight by area for bocaccio, yelloweye, and canary rockfish for 1970 to 1987. However, note that all numbers are based on a single percent composition estimate made in one year (Pedersen and Bargmann 1986) that was then applied to all the “Rockfish” category of landings from 1970-87.

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## **Appendix E – Technical Comments**

### ***Public Comments***

Public comments were received from the Western States Petroleum Association, Mr. Sam Wright, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks. These comments are reproduced below.



**Western States Petroleum Association**  
Credible Solutions • Responsive Service • Since 1907

**Frank E. Holmes**  
Manager, Northwest Region

June 22, 2009

Chief, Protected Resources Division  
Northwest Region  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd., Suite 1100  
Portland, Oregon 97232

***RE: Proposed Listing of Puget Sound Rockfish***

To Whom It May Concern:

The Western States Petroleum Association ("WSPA") appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed listing of three species of Puget Sound: rockfish – Boccaccio, yelloweye, and canary, under the Endangered Species Act ("ESA"). See 74 Fed. Reg. 18516 (April 29, 2009). WSPA is a non-profit trade association that represents companies that account for the bulk of petroleum exploration, production, refining, transportation and marketing in the western states. WSPA represents a range of companies that operate in various capacities in and around Puget Sound, and are significant contributors to the local and regional economies.

It is of primary importance to WSPA members that they operate in a safe, secure, efficient, and environmentally-responsible manner, in Puget Sound and in the other regional and national locations in which they operate. Members have committed significant resources and developed technological sophistication in order to achieve this goal.

While WSPA supports the appropriate protection of sensitive species under the ESA, it also believes that species listings must be properly supported by science, and reflect an accurate understanding of the risks and available conservation programs. To this end, this letter sets out WSPA's comments concerning the proposed listings, and provides information intended to inform final determinations.

***Scientific Foundation for Proposed Listings***

As an initial matter, the proposed rule sets out in some detail the gaps and inadequacies associated with the underlying data, raising questions about the defensibility of the scientific foundation for the proposed listings. While ESA conclusions, including those about listings, can be based on less than conclusive scientific evidence, there must be evidence upon which to base

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Chief, Protected Resources Division  
June 22, 2009

the conclusions. See *National Ass'n of Home Builders v. Norton*, 340 F.3d 835, 847 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2003) citing *Bennett v. Spear*, 520 U.S. 154, 176 (1997) (“The obvious purpose of the requirement that each agency ‘use the best scientific and commercial evidence available’ is to ensure that the ESA not be implemented haphazardly, on the basis of *speculation or surmise*.”). Given the identified gaps in the proposed listing rule, it does not seem certain here that the threshold for listing has been met.

For example, in the abundance trends analysis, quantitative estimates of trends in abundance were not generated for the petitioned species since the low sampling of catches in many years provided insufficient yearly estimates. See 74 Fed. Reg. 18531. Due to such data gaps, the listing rule appears to be based on inferences and extrapolations. NMFS itself states that due to a lack of systematic sampling targeting rockfishes, absolute estimates of population size of the proposed species “cannot be generated with any accuracy.” *Id.* For current abundance, results were extrapolated from a video survey to estimate the population size of common rockfish species and then the percent frequency of the petitioned species in the recreational catch (with its attendant data limitations) were applied. *Id.* For abundance trends, the overall trend in rockfishes, which was heavily influenced by common rockfish species, were used to make inferences about the magnitude of trend in the petitioned species. *Id.*

Given the considerable uncertainties associated with abundance estimation, and the admitted lack of accurate estimates of population sizes for the proposed species, it appears premature to propose these rockfish species for listing at this time. Statements contained in the proposed rule suggest that NMFS does not possess a reasonable basis to conclude that listing is warranted at this time. At most, available information may suggest a need for monitoring of the proposed species to determine current population sizes. Furthermore, listing these species at this stage will make it difficult, if not impossible, to establish accurate delisting and recovery criteria.

#### ***Role of Environmental Contaminants in Factors for Species Decline***

Regarding the effects of environmental contaminants on rockfish status, WSPA encourages NMFS to insure its conclusions clearly and specifically reflect the best available science, and include appropriate qualifiers. The proposed rule states that few studies have investigated the effects of toxins on rockfish ecology or physiology, that “no studies have shown an effect on rockfish” reproduction, and that the full effect of contaminants on rockfish in the Georgia Basin remains unknown. See 74 Fed. Reg. 18533. There does not appear to be any conclusive evidence that water quality is a limiting factor impacting the status of the species.

Moreover, information contained in the proposed rule should be augmented to reflect current regulatory mechanisms that address environmental contaminants. For example, the use of DDT has been prohibited by Federal law and is no longer actively used in the Puget Sound region. In addition, the use of PCBs is limited to existing equipment that was manufactured in the past, and such equipment is subject to stringent monitoring, reporting, cleanup, and disposal requirements under various federal laws, including RCRA and CERCLA. The proposed rule should be revised to reflect the import of these and other various Federal and State environmental laws that limit rockfish exposure to environmental contaminants.



Chief, Protected Resources Division  
June 22, 2009

### ***Existing Regulatory Programs***

As noted in the proposed rule, the ESA requires the Secretary of Commerce to take into account efforts being made to protect a species that has been proposed for listing. The rationale behind this requirement is that if sufficiently protective regulatory requirements exist, it is then redundant and undesirable to overlay additional ESA regulation. See, NMFS and FWS, Policy for Evaluating Conservation Efforts, 68 Fed. Reg. 15113 (2003); *Natural Resources Defense Council v. U.S. Dept. of the Interior*, 113 F.3d 1121, n.1 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1997).

With regard to the rockfish species proposed for listing, it is unclear whether existing regulatory protections have been given full credit, and thus whether the case has been made for an additional regulatory overlay. For example, the proposed listing rule identifies overfishing as the essential cause of rockfish declines, and explains the fairly recent increases in protective regulations that may address this factor for decline. While NMFS suggests that fishing regulations have not yet conclusively demonstrated their effectiveness, it is not clear why these regulations that directly target the key causal factor have been discounted in determining that a listing is necessary. In particular, it would seem prudent for NMFS to engage in a more detailed analysis of the adequacy of Washington fishing regulations. Perhaps through discussions with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, NMFS could develop an agreement with the State to further restrict fishing, or enhance regulatory implementation and enforcement, in manner that makes listing of the species unnecessary.

Aside from State fishing regulations, NMFS takes a pessimistic view of the potential impact of the Puget Sound Partnership ("PSP") on the basis that it "does not presently have a track record to support a conclusion that the control or reduction of pollutants into Puget Sound is reasonably foreseeable." See 74 Fed. Reg. 18537. It is difficult to reconcile this conclusion with the guidance of the agency's own Policy for Evaluating Conservation Efforts. See 68 Fed. Reg. 15114-115 (2003). The PSP seems to be effectively discounted despite its legislative mandate, significant funding, and its focus on Puget Sound, including the key problem of stormwater runoff: "It is not possible to draw conclusions about Partnership efforts and how they may reduce pollution and contamination or other threats to rockfish populations." *Id.* To make a rational case for listing, existing measures such as these deserve a more sustained and detailed analysis.

### ***Critical Habitat Designation***

Information has been requested about the potential economic impacts and impacts on national security of a rockfish critical habitat designation. There is no indication that the activities of WSPA members (including its marine shipping activities) negatively impact or adversely modify any rockfish PCEs that might exist in Puget Sound. Marine vessel operations in Puget Sound are highly regulated, and closely scrutinized. Puget Sound possesses the lowest commercial vessel oil spill rate in the nation. There have been no documented drift grounding oil spill incidents in Puget Sound in over several million monitored vessel transits. Thus, even if critical habitat was determinable for the rockfish proposed for listing - which seems unlikely given the lack of good

Chief, Protected Resources Division  
June 22, 2009

information presented in support of listing – there is no causal relationship between marine shipping and rockfish to justify mandatory restrictions in the context of a section 7 consultation.

If, however, restrictions on vessel movements were imposed as a result of a rockfish critical habitat designation, the economic and national security implications would be significant. Vessel movements and shipping lane operations in general implicate important national security considerations and international agreements. Any material limitations on shipping movements would have significant impacts on the regional economy. Such impacts would need to be carefully balanced against the benefits of any wide-ranging critical habitat designation.

**Summary**

In summary, the proposed rule identifies a number of uncertainties regarding rockfish population size that call in to question the basis for species listing at this time. NMFS is required to base its listing decisions on the best available scientific and commercial information. Available information, according to NMFS, is lacking regarding overall rockfish population sizes. By extension, it would seem difficult, if not impossible, to conclude the species warrant listing when their overall numbers are still in question.

WSPA supports responsible management of natural resources in Puget Sound. A number of State, Federal and local environmental initiatives are underway to address environmental concerns. Many of these programs have been in place for a number of years, and effectively address factors that are thought to have contributed to species decline. WSPA urges NMFS to analyze the regulatory programs in detail and, if necessary, work with WDFW to further strengthen fishing regulations in a manner that avoids the need to list these species. Doing so will validate the efforts of groups working to protect Puget Sound, and it will help foster a climate of regulatory certainty in the business community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments concerning the development of the proposed Puget Sound rockfish listing. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding these comments.

Sincerely,



Frank E. Holmes,  
Manager, Northwest Region

copy: WSPA Environmental Committee  
Jim Lynch, K&L Gates LLP

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To: Chief, Protected Resources Division, Northwest Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1201NE Lloyd Blvd., Suite 1100, Portland, OR 97232

From: Sam Wright, 1522 Evanston Ct. NE, Olympia, WA 98506 (360-943-4424, [sam.wright@att.net](mailto:sam.wright@att.net))

**Subject: Proposed Endangered, Threatened, and Not Warranted Status for Distinct Population Segments of Rockfish in Puget Sound**

The subject at hand represents a first-rate professional work product and everyone involved should be commended for their efforts. There are only a few problems that need to be resolved.



The most serious deficiency is failure to evaluate potential adverse impacts to low abundance rockfish populations due to depensation, especially the sub-set of depensatory mortality factors commonly known as Allee effects. The subject was presented in a general way in the April 2007 petition, but I have to admit that I did not realize a specific problem until very recently. Last November, David Jennings, a certified marine fish identifier and underwater surveyor, presented a report to the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission about a 2008 assessment of fish populations in the area between Neah Bay and Tatoosh Island. In that report, he stated that, in ten days of surveys, he detected a total of two tiger rockfish, three China rockfish, and two canary rockfish. No yelloweye rockfish were observed. All of these four species are brightly colored and have small home ranges in common.

I immediately knew what the specific problem was for low abundance rockfish populations with small home ranges. It is the most fundamental of all possible Allee effects – failure of individual mature fish to find mature mates of the opposite sex. With abundance levels this low, there is really no alternative explanation unless mature fish routinely move far outside their home ranges to specifically seek mature mates. I then checked the NGO REEF ([www.reef.org](http://www.reef.org)) data base for the same four species in Washington waters of the Georgia Basin. This showed the same consistent low abundance picture for all four species during recent years. You can never have the infrequent successful recruitment event if most of the mature fish cannot even find mature mates. It is a special (and rare) resource conservation problem where every single fish matters and you cannot allow additional fishing mortality for any reason. If the BRT Team had been aware of this problem, they may well have cast their majority vote for Endangered instead of Threatened for canary rockfish and yelloweye rockfish.

I also realized that the April 2007 petition should have included tiger rockfish and China rockfish. I encourage the National Marine Fisheries Service to consider initiating a “supplemental” status review of these two species in the Georgia Basin. This is a very opportune time to conduct such a review since over 90% of the work has already been done and would not have to be repeated at some time in the future in response to a new ESA Petition. This additional status review would complete the coverage for Puget Sound rockfish species. There are no additional species with the combination of long-term persistence in the area, low abundance and small home ranges.

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The only other serious problem is in your discussion of bycatch, where the language seems to indicate that the most serious concern is with the lingcod fishery. This is incorrect. By a wide margin, the highest bycatch mortality for rockfish occurs in the Puget Sound recreational fishery for “blackmouth”. These are immature resident ESA-listed Puget Sound Chinook salmon and form the backbone of the Puget Sound salmon fishery since returning mature Chinook and coho salmon have reduced or ceased feeding and are much harder to catch. Blackmouth are found right near the bottom, especially during the five month period from November through March. Immature Chinook are much more associated with the bottom than other species of Pacific salmon and this is why Chinook always predominate in the salmon bycatch in winter bottom trawl fisheries off both Washington and Alaska – even though they are by far the least abundant of the five Pacific salmon species.

The Puget Sound blackmouth fishery is very different than the summer ocean salmon fishery that some of the BRT team members may be familiar with. In addition to fishing close to the bottom, there is widespread use of down riggers and electronic fish finders. This allows anglers to place their terminal gear at precisely the same depth as the fish and also allows them to fish effectively throughout the entire tidal cycle. Beginning in 2007, fishing opportunity was significantly expanded by providing new selective fisheries for adipose marked Chinook. This also increased the bycatch mortality for rockfish since it is impossible fish for blackmouth without encountering rockfish. Additional opportunities were provided in 2008 and additional increases are scheduled for 2009. This means that there have already been three successive incremental increases in bycatch mortality for rockfish in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

The other problem is that targeted fishing for rockfish is allowed every time fishing is allowed for salmon and/or lingcod. People still fish for rockfish with a one fish daily bag limit because they fish for boat limits, not individual limits, and high grading is a common practice. Thus, the increases in salmon fishing opportunities have produced three incremental increases in targeted fishing for rockfish in 2007, 2008 and 2009. The obvious solution, and the only one that protects each individual rockfish, is to confine all recreational fishing for both salmon and marine fish to waters inside the 20 fathom line. The equally obvious benefit to this is that, due to the additional protection provided to ESA-listed Puget Sound Chinook, a year around selective fishery could be justified for Chinook.

The elimination of deep water fishing with down rigger gear would also benefit the ESA-listed Puget Sound Chinook resource. When you fish in deep water with down rigger gear, it is often necessary to tighten the fishing line release mechanism in order to counter the drag effects from strong currents and/or snagged vegetation. Small Chinook (less than the minimum size limit) are then unable to trip the fishing line release mechanism. They remain undetected until the down rigger gear is retrieved. By this time, they have been dragged to exhaustion and will either be dead or die within six hours due to a build-up of excessive lactic acid in the body.

A final point concerns your discussion of releases of propagated fish, where the numbers given for salmon are incorrect. The correct numbers for Chinook salmon are 45.6 million sub-yearlings and 2.6 million yearlings. Ecological interactions with hatchery Chinook are discussed on pages 9 and 10 of the April 2007 petition.

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**Canary rockfish from NGO REEF ([www.reef.org](http://www.reef.org)) data base, minimum of 1 fish**

2001 Dabob Bay	15 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2001 Vashon Island	16 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 2
2001 West Seattle Area	28 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2002 Kitsap Peninsula, Port Gamble – Gig Harbor, includes Poulsbo and Bremerton	8 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 2
2003 Dabob Bay	57 surveys, fish seen in 6, density 1.3
2003 Quatsap Pt. and Misery Pt., Potlatch State Park	63 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 3
2004 Dabob Bay	19 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 2
2004 Quatsap Pt. and Misery Pt., Potlatch State Park	72 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 1
2004 Vashon Is.	29 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2005 Dabob Bay	13 surveys, fish seen in 6, density 1.3
2005 West Seattle Area	44 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 2
2006 Dabob Bay	38 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2006 Quatsap Pt. and Misery Pt., Potlatch State Park	99 surveys, fish seen in 4, density 2
2007 Quatsap Pt. and Misery Pt., Potlatch State Park	135 surveys, fish seen in 3, density 2
2007 Whidbey Is.	150 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 2
2007 Tacoma Area	207 surveys, fish seen in 3, density 1
2008 Dabob Bay	44 surveys, fish seen in 6, density 1.5

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**China rockfish from NGO REEF ([www.reef.org](http://www.reef.org)) data base, minimum of 1 fish**

1998 Bainbridge Is.	20 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
1999 San Juan Is. (including Henry)	1 survey, fish seen in 1, density 2
1999 Hood Head - Dungeness Bay	31 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 3
2000 Hood Head - Dungeness Bay	18 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 2
2001 Vashon Is.	16 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 1
2001 Tacoma Area	56 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 1
2002 Hood Head - Dungeness Bay	15 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 3
2003 Vashon Is.	17 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 2
2004 Port Susan and Possession Sound	21 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 1
2005 Orcas Is.	33 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 2
2006 Orcas Is.	95 surveys, fish seen in 3, density 2.3
2006 Quatsap Pt. and Misery Pt., Potlatch State Park	99 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 3
2007 Port Susan and Possession Sound	21 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 3
2007 Bainbridge Is.	15 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 2

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**Tiger rockfish from NGO REEF ([www.reef.org](http://www.reef.org)) data base, minimum of 1 fish**

1998 Orcas Is.	3 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 1.5
1998 Lopez Is.	14 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
1999 Edmonds	46 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 2
2000 Orcas Is.	3 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 2
2001 Orcas Island	9 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2001 Tacoma Area	56 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2001 Kitsap Peninsula, Port Gamble – Gig Harbor (includes Poulsbo and Bremerton)	18 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 2
2002 Orcas Is.	8 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 2
2002 San Juan Is. (including Henry)	33 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2004 Orcas Is.	32 surveys, fish seen in 7, density 1.7
2004 San Juan Is. (including Henry)	22 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 1.5
2005 Orcas Is.	33 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 1
2005 Shaw Is.	1 survey, fish seen in 1, density 1
2005 Quatsap Pt. and Misery Pt., Potlatch State Park	36 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 2
2006 Orcas Is.	95 surveys, fish seen in 6, density 2
2006 Shaw Is.	9 surveys, fish seen in 4, density 1
2006 Stuart Is. and Spieden Is. (including Jones and Flattop)	3 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2007 Orcas Is.	37 surveys, fish seen in 6, density 1.5
2008 Orcas Is.	26 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2008 Whidbey Is.	157 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2008 Dungeness Bay – Kydaka Pt.	40 surveys, fish seen in 3, density 1

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**Yelloweye rockfish from NGO REEF ([www.reef.org](http://www.reef.org)) data base, minimum of 1 fish**

1998 Edmonds	53 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2001 Vashon Is.	16 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 2
2002 Edmonds	102 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2003 Dabob Bay	57 surveys, fish seen in 3, density 1.7
2004 Orcas Is.	32 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 1
2004 Dabob Bay	19 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 2
2004 Quatsap Pt. and Misery Pt., Potlatch State Park	72 surveys, fish seen in 3, density 1.3
2004 Whidbey Is.	72 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2005 Dabob Bay	13 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 1
2006 Orcas Is.	95 surveys, fish seen in 4, density 2
2006 Whidbey Is.	58 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 1.5
2006 Edmonds	11 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2007 Orcas Is.	37 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 1.5
2007 Cypress Is.	21 surveys, fish seen in 2, density 1
2007 Dabob Bay	51 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2007 Whidbey Is.	150 surveys, fish seen in 4, density 1.8
2008 Decatur	7 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2008 Whidbey Is.	157 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2008 Port Susan and Possession Sound	11 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 1
2008 Dungeness Bay – Kydaka Pt.	40 surveys, fish seen in 1, density 2



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State of Washington  
**Department of Fish and Wildlife**

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June 22, 2009

Garth Griffin  
Chief, Protected Resources Division  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1201 NE Lloyd Boulevard  
Suite 1100  
Portland, Oregon 97232

Dear Mr. Griffin:

After analysis of the April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009 federal register notice (74 FR 18516) and associated status report (NMFS 2008), the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) concurs with the not warranted status for greenstriped rockfish (*Sebastes elongatus*) and redstripe rockfish (*S. proriger*). We also agree with the proposed threatened listings of Georgia Basin DPS canary rockfish (*S. pinniger*) and Georgia Basin DPS yelloweye (*S. ruberrimus*). However we question the proposed endangered listing of bocaccio (*S. paucispinis*) and request you consider listing this species as threatened. We request this change for bocaccio due to lack of information regarding the species in Puget Sound and to be consistent with our own evaluation of the stock status of this species, Palsson et al. (DRAFT 2009). The WDFW appreciates the opportunity to elaborate and comment upon six areas in the federal register notice (FRN): 1) DPS conclusions, 2) Trends in abundance, 3) Overutilization for commercial and recreational purposes, 4) Present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of habitat, 5) Inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms, and 6) Efforts to protect rockfish in Puget Sound. We will limit our comments to the three species that are proposed for listing – bocaccio, canary rockfish, and yelloweye rockfish.

**DPS Conclusions**

Two vexing questions exist regarding the proposed rockfish DPS's: 1) do sufficient data exist for the determination of the appropriate DPS for bocaccio, canary, and yelloweye rockfish; and 2) can assumptions be made from other species where data exist.

*1) Do sufficient data exist?*

Given the specifics outlined in the petition to list bocaccio, canary rockfish, and yelloweye rockfish in Puget Sound, the Biological Review Team (BRT) developed an appropriate set of possible DPS scenarios. These scenarios fall into two categories: 1) DPSs at varying geographic scales within Puget Sound and Georgia Basin differentiated

Mr. Griffin  
June 22, 2009  
Page 2

from coastal DPS(s) (Scenarios 1-3) and 2) a single DPS inclusive of Puget Sound, Georgia Basin, and Washington Coast (Scenario 4). The BRT review determined there was a lack of appropriate information, especially population genetic data, to adequately evaluate population structure for these three petitioned rockfish species stating "...it is not possible to make broad statements about the patterns of radiation and divergence" among rockfish species. More specifically, known population differentiation patterns within rockfish species do not appear to fall consistently within phylogenetic clades, ecological groups, or among species occurring within similar oceanographic features. However, we emphasize the importance of the single-DPS hypothesis for the protection and recovery of these species, and urge that the hypothesis be further vetted prior to the final listing decision. We further urge NMFS to renew attempts to locate existing tissue for genetic analysis, confer with regional management and academic authorities, and conduct a thorough literature search prior to making a final listing decision.

2) *Can assumptions be made from other species?*

Genetic data from five rockfish populations within Puget Sound, Georgia Basin, or Queen Charlotte Islands exists: the three *Pteropodus* species considered by NMFS in 2001 (copper, brown, and quillback rockfish; all within Puget Sound), Pacific ocean perch (Queen Charlotte Islands), and yelloweye rockfish (Georgia Basin). Based on genetic analyses, each species showed differentiation between populations within the restricted waters of Puget Sound, Georgia Basin, or Queen Charlotte Islands and outer coast populations. With the exception of the *Pteropodus* species, these species are not closely related and do not share similar life histories or distributions. However, their occurrence in isolated waters, such as Puget Sound, and the differentiation of these isolated populations from other populations do suggest that the physical environment within Puget Sound and George Basin may restrict gene flow in and out of the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin areas. There is, however, information from other life history research that suggests other modes of distribution and dispersal exist among rockfish occurring in Puget Sound. Eleven of the 28 species of rockfish recorded in Puget Sound have only been observed five times or less until 1980. The BRT presumes that all rockfish within Puget Sound form an inland DPS implying these rare records each constitute a unique DPS. It is more likely that these species stray into Puget Sound from coastal waters. Recent occurrence patterns of vermilion rockfish which were not known from Puget Sound prior to 1980 (Miller and Borton 1980) demonstrate that intrusions from coastal waters dynamically influence species compositions. Yellowtail rockfish appear to only occur as juveniles in the San Juan Islands with subsequent dispersal of adults to coastal waters (Barker 1979). More recent observations of rockfish recruitment confirm that post-larval copper, quillback, and brown rockfish are self-sustaining populations within Puget Sound proper but that black and yellowtail rockfish may recruit to Puget Sound proper as yearlings from adjacent northern waters. Additionally, whether bocaccio and canary rockfish constitute self-sustaining populations may be questionable. Their early life stages have not been confirmed in Puget Sound (Garrison and Miller 1982) and their documented occurrence in Puget Sound Proper is restricted to less than 24 locations compared to hundreds of records for copper, quillback, and brown rockfish

Mr. Griffin  
June 22, 2009  
Page 3

(Washington 1977, Miller and Borton 1980). Evidence that the species occur as self-sustaining populations within Puget Sound is based upon multiple size classes. The occurrence of multiple size classes could equally be explained by success and sporadic recruitment events from coastal waters. Within these hypotheses, assumptions, and patterns is a lack of data to resolve them. The WDFW supports further research and monitoring to remedy this data gap. Recognizing the lack of direct data, the WDFW agrees with the BRT's selection of Scenario 3 for the Georgia Basin DPS as most likely for bocaccio, canary, and yelloweye rockfish. That yelloweye rockfish, a demersal species as an adult, shows isolation between British Columbian inland and coastal populations is strong evidence that precautionary approaches are warranted, and we believe scenario 3 to be the most precautionary DPS designation.

#### **Trends in Abundance**

The WDFW concurs with the general population trend analyses for the three proposed species. These patterns generally follow those of Palsson et al. (*DRAFT* 2009) that canary, yelloweye, and bocaccio rockfish were generally more common in early time series of species compositions and that catch rates and relative abundances of rockfish have declined. The WDFW cautions that early species identifications may reflect the difficulty of identifying rockfish by lay observers or untrained samplers. One new piece of information shows promising evidence that yelloweye rockfish are not rare. In a recent region-wide survey of shallow and deepwater rocky habitats in the San Juan Islands, yelloweye rockfish were observed in 7% of 207 ROV transects (WDFW, unpublished data). These data are being processed and will result in population estimates for yelloweye rockfish in this region. The use of the ROV has been successful in Puget Sound and offers a great potential to assess and monitor shallow and deepwater species in inland marine waters (Pacunski et al. 2008).

The WDFW requests two corrections in the FRN. There is a significant misspelling regarding bocaccio found on Page 18521. The statement that "89%" of the recreational rockfish catch in the late 1970s consisted of bocaccio should read as "8-9%. This statement was attributed to Palsson et al. (2008) but these authors did not make this statement. The draft BRT report by Drake et al. (2008) should be credited with this statement that was drawn from dated Washington Department of Fisheries (WDF) Sport Catch Reports.

#### **Overutilization for Commercial, Recreational, Scientific or Educational Purposes**

The WDFW concurs with the conclusion that overutilization for commercial and recreational purposes is the most severe threat to petitioned rockfish in the Georgia Basin (74 FR 18534). The WDFW acknowledges that past fisheries have contributed to the decline of bocaccio, canary, and yelloweye rockfish. In recognition of the impact fishing has had on the proposed species, the WDFW has taken action to reduce fishing pressure on these three rockfish and other rockfish species in Puget Sound. From 1982 to 2001,

Mr. Griffin  
June 22, 2009  
Page 4

the WDFW reduced the daily bag limit to one rockfish (for Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca east of Slip Point) with the regulation of no retention for canary and yelloweye rockfish in recreational rockfish fisheries. The fishing season is scheduled from May 1 to September 30 for marine areas 5, 6, 7, and 9; only during the lingcod and salmon fishing season in marine areas 8, 10, 11, and 13; and is closed year-round in marine area 12. According to the WDFW's current catch records, very little landings of any of the three rockfish species proposed for listing occur in state managed fisheries in Puget Sound. Current harvest levels of these three species in Puget Sound are very low.

**Present or Threatened Destruction, Modification, or Curtailment of Habitat or Range**

The BRT identified habitat destruction as a threat to petitioned rockfish (71 FR 18533). In particular, loss of rocky habitat, loss of eelgrass and kelp, introduction of non-native species that modify habitat, and degradation of water quality were identified as specific threats to rockfish habitat in the Georgia Basin. Palsson et al. (*DRAFT 2009*) does not indicate that loss of rocky habitat has occurred. However, the habitat may be degraded due to the presence of derelict fishing gear or impaired water quality. The impact of hypoxia as a risk to the petitioned rockfish in southern Puget Sound may be overstated in that historical documented occurrences of canary, bocaccio, and yelloweye rockfish do not correspond to areas of poor water quality in southern Puget Sound. It is unclear if these species utilized these habitats prior to their degradation. Furthermore, these species have not been observed during recent massive fish kills in southern Hood Canal (Palsson et al. 2008).

The FRN adequately characterizes what is known and not known regarding the impact or threat of toxic contaminants on the proposed rockfish species. The WDFW agrees with the reasonable conclusions regarding the potential for health impacts on these species using what is known regarding exposure of closely related rockfish. In addition, the WDFW agrees with the reasonable conclusions regarding potential reproductive impacts on rockfish using results from non-rockfish species. In particular, the FRN recognizes that urban areas have become *de facto* no-take zones for some species of rockfish (e.g., *S. maliger*, *S. caurinus*, and *S. auriculatus*), and where greatest exposure to toxics occurs. If reproductive potential of recovering populations is concentrated in urban areas, the FRN reasonably concludes that toxics could impede recovery. However, it should be noted that although other rockfish species are common in the WDFW's toxics-monitoring surveys of Puget Sound urban waters, none of the three species proposed have ever been recorded in our toxics-monitoring surveys in urban waters.

The previous paragraph describes potential exposure patterns for benthic feeding rockfish in urban areas however the FRN review indicates that all three petitioned species appear to rely to some degree on pelagic prey. If pelagic prey dominate the diet of a petitioned species it may experience greater exposure to persistent bioaccumulative toxics (PBTs), across a greater spatial range (not just urban areas). Pelagic prey such as Pacific herring

Mr. Griffin  
June 22, 2009  
Page 5

in Puget Sound have unusually high body burdens of PBTs (West and O'Neill 2008); these PBTs biomagnify in their predators (e.g., Chinook salmon -- see O'Neill and West 2009). Long life span and residency in Puget Sound, both characteristics of the three petitioned rockfish species, increase the risk of exposure. In addition, environmental levels of legacy PBTs such as polychlorinated biphenyls were probably higher in Puget Sound's pelagic species in the 1970s and 80s (West and O'Neill 2007), the period when the petitioned species declined. If petitioned species consume herring or similar pelagic prey, we believe that PBT contamination may have played a role in their decline, and is a risk factor for their recovery.

#### **Inadequacy of Existing Regulatory Mechanisms**

The WDFW is currently assessing and addressing limiting factors to Puget Sound rockfish, including fishing impacts, in the "Puget Sound Rockfish Conservation Plan" (WDFW, *DRAFT* 2009) through the State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) process, scheduled for completion in December 2009. The WDFW encourages the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to review the plan after adoption, to inform their listing decision prior to making a final determination on the status of these three rockfish species.

#### **Efforts Being Made to Protect Rockfish Habitat in Puget Sound and the Georgia Basin**

In the FRN, pages 18537-38, a number of habitat protection actions are identified. However, this section omits habitat protection programs that are undertaken by the state regulatory agencies. The statutory owner of aquatic lands is the Department of Natural Resources. This agency has a number of strategies to protect seafloor habitats and has created a system of aquatic reserves. The WDFW has a systematic protection process to preserve the habitat of fish and wildlife species as implemented through the Hydraulic Permit Approval (HPA) process (see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hab/phslist.htm>) and the Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) Program (see [http://wdfw.wa.gov/habitat/permits\\_regs.html](http://wdfw.wa.gov/habitat/permits_regs.html)). The impacts of proposed construction projects in marine waters on rockfish and other species are evaluated through these programs and offer a conservation framework for habitat management. Additionally, WDFW has implemented a system of marine reserves that include habitats of the proposed species.

Mr. Griffin  
June 22, 2009  
Page 6

#### Summary Recommendations

- The WDFW concurs with the proposed not warranted status for greenstriped and redstripe rockfish and the proposal to list canary and yelloweye rockfish as threatened in the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin DPS.
- The WDFW strongly recommends that NMFS consider reevaluating the proposed endangered status of bocaccio rockfish and recommend a threatened listing.
- Recognizing the lack of data, the WDFW agrees with the BRT's selection of Scenario 3 Georgia Basin DPS as most likely for bocaccio, canary rockfish, and yelloweye rockfish. Clarification of the DPS boundaries for each species would fulfill the most important information gap. Incorrect specification of the boundaries could negate any recovery efforts and increase risk to each of the stocks. Suggested research would focus on genetic studies, stable isotope studies, tagging, or a combination.
- The WDFW requests two corrections in the FRN. The statement that "89%" of the recreational rockfish catch in the late 1970s consisted of bocaccio should read as "8-9% and be attributed to the draft BRT report by Drake et al. (2008).
- The WDFW agrees with the BRT's identification of habitat degradation as a threat to petitioned rockfish (71 FR 18533). The WDFW agrees with the FRN conclusions regarding the potential of contaminant impacts on the health and reproduction of rockfish species as a risk factor. However, it should be noted that although some rockfish species are common in the WDFW's toxics-monitoring surveys of Puget Sound urban waters, canary, yelloweye, or bocaccio rockfish have never been recorded in our toxics-monitoring surveys.
- The WDFW concurs that historic fishing levels have contributed to the current low abundance levels of the proposed species. Decreasing and eliminating limiting factors upon rockfish are underway through measures proposed in the WDFW "Puget Sound Rockfish Conservation Plan". The WDFW intends to complete the conservation plan by 2009.
- Habitat protection actions on the part of state regulatory agencies are omitted in the FRN, including protection of seafloor habitats and establishment of aquatic reserves through the Department of Natural Resources, and protection of habitat for fish and wildlife species implemented through the Hydraulic Permit Approval (HPA) process and Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) program through the WDFW.

The WDFW is strongly committed to protecting and enhancing rockfish populations. We look forward to the opportunity to develop and/or comment on the proposed protective regulations and critical habitat designations in the event bocaccio, canary rockfish, and/or yelloweye rockfish are listed. The WDFW will continue to assist NMFS staff if additional data is requested during the review process. The WDFW would be happy to provide a copy of the Puget Sound Rockfish Conservation Plan upon approval December 2009.

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Mr. Griffin  
June 22, 2009  
Page 7

Please feel free to contact Wayne Palsson, Groundfish Research Scientist (425-379-2313, [Wayne.Palsson@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Wayne.Palsson@dfw.wa.gov)); Greg Bargmann, Marine Ecosystem Manager (360-902-2825, [Gregory.Bargmann@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Gregory.Bargmann@dfw.wa.gov)); or Mitch Dennis, WDFW ESA Response Unit Biologist (360-902-2654, [Mitchell.Dennis@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Mitchell.Dennis@dfw.wa.gov)) with any questions. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed listing of Georgia Basin DPSs for bocaccio, canary rockfish, and yelloweye rockfish.

Sincerely,



Philip Anderson  
Interim Director

cc: Jim Scott, WDFW  
Jo Wadsworth, WDFW  
Craig Burley, WDFW  
Greg Bargmann, WDFW  
Craig Busack, WDFW  
Mitch Dennis, WDFW  
Wayne Palsson, WDFW  
Ken Warheit, WDFW  
Jim West, WDFW  
Amilee Wilson, WDFW

Mr. Griffin  
June 22, 2009  
Page 8

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Mr. Griffin  
June 22, 2009  
Page 9

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State of Washington  
**DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

Mailing Address: 600 Capitol Way N • Olympia, WA 98501-1091 • (360) 932-2200, TDD (360) 902-2207  
Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building • 1111 Washington Street SE • Olympia, WA

December 14, 2009

Ms. Donna Darm  
Assistant Regional Administrator  
Protected Resources Division  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
7600 Sand Point Way N.E.  
Seattle, Washington 98115

Dear Ms. Darm:

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) provided comments in our letter of June 22, 2009, on the proposed listing of bocaccio, canary, and yelloweye rockfishes in Puget Sound. In that letter, we agreed with the Biological Review Team's (BRT) designation of a distinct population segment for bocaccio east of Port Angeles, but requested that bocaccio be considered threatened and not endangered as proposed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

New analysis conducted by NOAA has recently come to light that raises substantive questions about the BRT's conclusions (and ours) on the population structure of bocaccio along the Pacific Coast and Puget Sound. In addition, the further examination and clarification of information casts further doubt on whether bocaccio is a viable population in Puget Sound.

We now suggest that bocaccio be considered a Species of Concern rather than a threatened or endangered species under the terms of the Endangered Species Act. It is our understanding that a previous status review identified a southern and a northern distinct population segment (DPS), and that the southern DPS was classified as a Species of Concern after the completion of a status review (67 FR69704 November 18, 2002). We believe that extension of the Species of Concern to the northern DPS is appropriate given the lack of scientific information on bocaccio in Puget Sound and the protective measures that will be put in place for all rockfish in Puget Sound.

In our letter of June 22, 2009, the Department agreed with the BRT's selection of Scenario 3 for the Georgia Basin distinct population segment (DPS) as the most likely DPS for bocaccio, canary, and yelloweye rockfish. We came to this conclusion in the same manner as the BRT. Lacking sufficient genetic data for these three species in Puget Sound, we used: 1) published data for these species in areas outside Puget Sound, and 2) comparative data from other species both within and outside the Georgia Basin (including

Ms. Donna Darm  
December 14, 2009  
Page 2

Puget Sound). Given the paucity of genetic data, especially for populations within Puget Sound, we agreed with the BRT that Scenario 3 was the most precautionary DPS designation. The Department still adheres to this opinion as it relates to the canary and yelloweye rockfish. However, we are now concerned that the comparative approach used to select a Georgia Basin DPS for bocaccio is wanting, especially in light of NOAA's August 2009 reanalysis of the Matala et al. (2004)<sup>1</sup> data (Field et al. 2009)<sup>2</sup>.

The Department supported a Georgia Basin DPS for bocaccio if the species demonstrated a propensity for spatial structuring of its populations. Matala et al. (2004) provided data and analyses that suggested spatial structuring for bocaccio, and the existence of at least three population-groups (Queen Charlotte Island, Vancouver Island to north of Point Conception, California, and south of Point Conception, including Baja California), with boundaries defined by oceanographic features.

However, Field et al. (2009) presented a reanalysis of the Matala et al. (2004) data and showed, using a Bayesian clustering method (program STRUCTURE), that the bocaccio populations studied by Matala et al. (2004) were not geographically structured, and from a genetic perspective the populations appears to be panmictic or unstructured<sup>3</sup>. Wishard et al. (1980) also showed no spatial structuring for chilipepper rockfish, a close relative of bocaccio.

If bocaccio is not spatially structured, it would be one of the few North Pacific *Sebastes* species whose populations do not respond structurally to geographic distances or oceanographic features (Berntson and Moran, 2009)<sup>4</sup>. Another of these species is the Mexican rockfish, with populations on either side of Baja California, and shows no spatial structuring (Bernardi et al. 2003)<sup>5</sup>. The Gulf of California is an inland water body with oceanographic features distinct from the outer Pacific coast. The Mexican rockfish situation parallels that of bocaccio but contrasts with Scenario 3 established by the BRT for bocaccio.

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<sup>1</sup> Matala, A.P., A.K. Gray, A.J. Gharrett, and M.S. Love. 2004. Microsatellite variation indicates population genetic structure of bocaccio. *N Am J Fish Manag* 24:1189–1202.

<sup>2</sup> Field, J.C., E.J. Dick, D. Pearson, and A.D. MacCall. 2009. Status of bocaccio, *Sebastes paucispinis*, in the Conception, Monterey and Eureka INPFC areas for 2009. Post-STAR Panel, pre-SSC review draft. [Disclaimer on document: This information is distributed solely for the purpose of pre-dissemination peer review under applicable information quality guidelines. It has not been formally disseminated by NOAA Fisheries. It does not represent and should not be construed to represent any agency determination or policy].

<sup>3</sup> The STRUCTURE analysis was conducted by D.E. Pearse, FED/SWFSC, and was cited as a personal communication.

<sup>4</sup> Berntson, E.A., and P. Moran. 2009. The utility and limitations of genetic data for stock identification and management of North Pacific rockfish (*Sebastes* spp.). *Rev Fish Biol Fisheries* 19:233–247.

<sup>5</sup> Bernardi, G., L. Findley, and A. Rocha-Olivares. 2003. Vicariance and dispersal across Baja California in disjunct marine fish populations. *Evolution* 57: 1599–1609.

Ms. Donna Darm  
December 14, 2009  
Page 3

The BRT also used length frequency data to support the conclusion of a bocaccio DPS in the Georgia Basin. The BRT inferred that bocaccio was a viable population in the DPS based upon the presence of multiple modes in the length frequency distributions compiled from measurements of fish caught in the recreational fishery. In the draft Predecisional Document (BRT, December 2, 2008) the BRT states:

“In particular, examination of the available size frequency data (discussed below) indicated the existence of multiple year classes spread out over the available time series, a pattern which does not appear to be consistent with a single rare recruitment event from the coastal population. These data also revealed the presence of individuals large enough to be sexually mature (Figure 14). Finally, the BRT noted that the 1999 year class which dominated coastal bocaccio populations was not apparent in the size frequency data in Puget Sound/Georgia Basin. The BRT interpreted this as evidence that the coastal and Puget Sound-Georgia Strait populations were not highly connected, and thus consisted of two discrete units.” (Page 47)

The BRT also noted:

“Size data suggests a cohort population structure that differs from coastal populations, and thus provides some evidence that this DPS is only weakly connected to California Current bocaccio. However, one BRT member thought that this DPS may consist of a vagrant population seeded by coastal populations.” (Page 85)

and,

“Size-frequency distributions for bocaccio in the 1970s indicate a wide range of sizes, with recreationally caught individuals from 25 to 85 cm. Although the distribution is clearly bimodal, some individuals in every 5 cm class are represented. This broad size distribution suggests a spread of ages, with some successful recruitment over many years. A similar range of sizes is also evident in the 1980s. These patterns are more likely to result from a self-sustaining population within the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin DPS rather than sporadic immigration from coastal populations. The temporal trend in size distributions for bocaccio also suggests size truncation of the population, with larger fish becoming less common over time. By the decade of the 2000s, no bocaccio data were available, so the BRT was not able to determine if the size truncation continued in this decade.” (Page 87)

We disagree with the BRT that the continuity of length frequency observations among 5-cm size classes supports the conclusion that successful recruitment is occurring in Puget Sound and that the presence of sexually mature individuals and many size (age) classes supports a viable population in Puget Sound. While mature individuals have been present in Puget Sound, multiple size classes could still result from sporadic, but not rare, recruitment from the coastal population. The BRT chose to group the small number of observations into decadal compilations of size frequencies. However, when individual

Ms. Donna Darm  
December 14, 2009  
Page 4

years are plotted, the continuity among size ranges is not obvious. When the size data are pooled, the size ranges appear to be continuous which would be suggestive of continuous recruitment (Figure 1). Alternatively, when examining the individual years, though the data are limited, there is no continuity in size classes; and the growth of an individual cohort is suggested between 1980 and 1982 and to 1985 (Figures 2 to 7). The growth between one year and the next may confuse the interpretation of a pooled length frequency distribution when, in fact, the continuity is caused by growth of a strong cohort over time. One point to note is that the below data are primarily from the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey. The data used by the BRT appears to include these data plus the data from our Biological Data System (BDS). In some years, the BDS data may have included the MRFSS data series and were augmented by occasional sampling by Department samplers. The use of the two data sets may be duplicative.

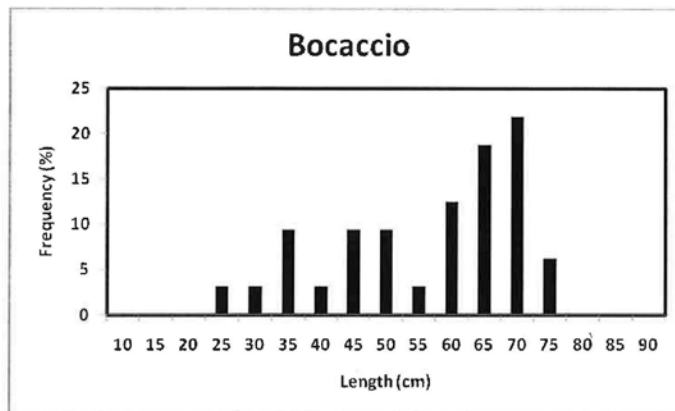


Figure 1. Pooled length frequency observations of bocaccio from trained samplers in Puget Sound, 1980-1998.

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Ms. Donna Darm  
December 14, 2009  
Page 5

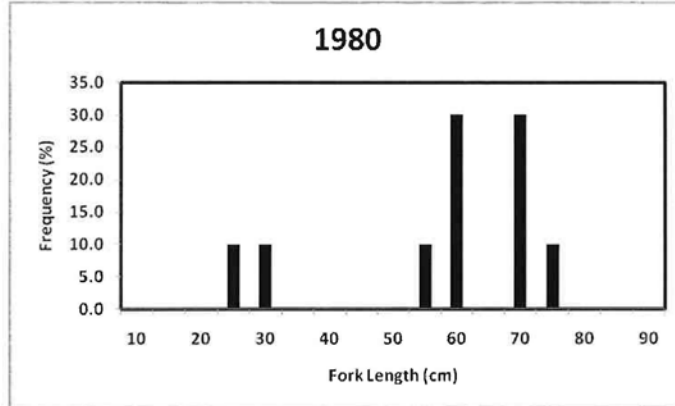


Figure 2. Individual year, 1980 length frequency observations of bocaccio from trained samplers in Puget Sound.

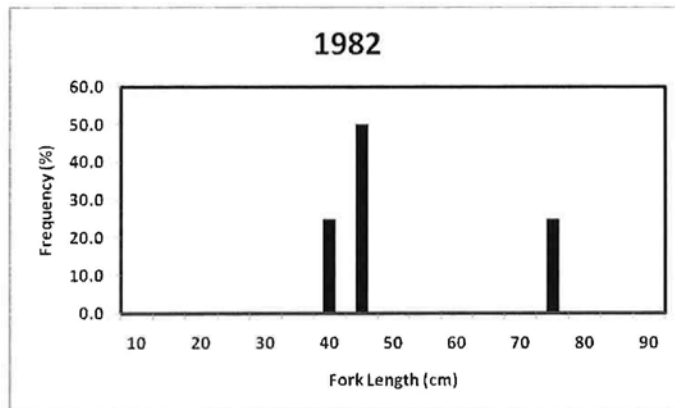


Figure 3. Individual year, 1982 length frequency observations of bocaccio from trained samplers in Puget Sound.

Ms. Donna Darm  
December 14, 2009  
Page 6

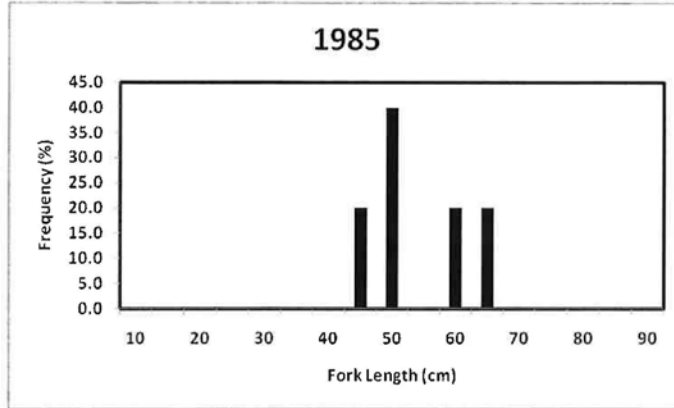


Figure 4. Individual year, 1985 length frequency observations of bocaccio from trained samplers in Puget Sound.

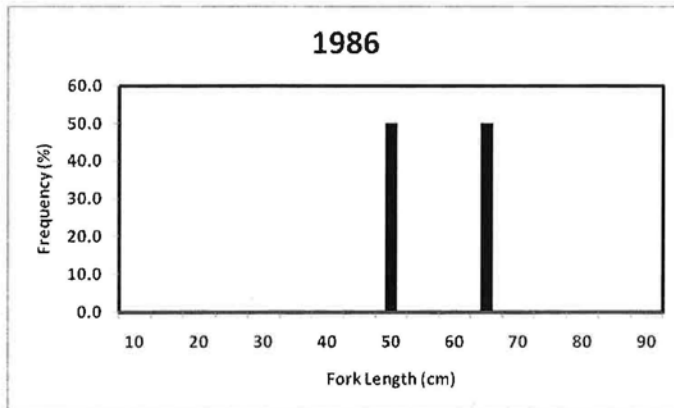


Figure 5. Individual year, 1986 length frequency observations of bocaccio from trained samplers in Puget Sound.

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Ms. Donna Darm  
December 14, 2009  
Page 7

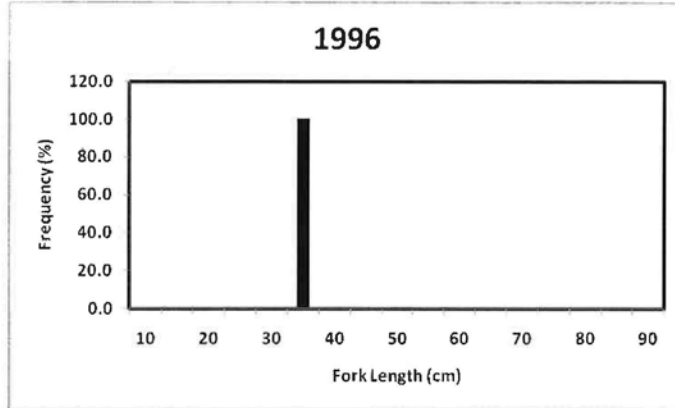


Figure 6. Individual year, 1996 length frequency observations of bocaccio from trained samplers in Puget Sound.

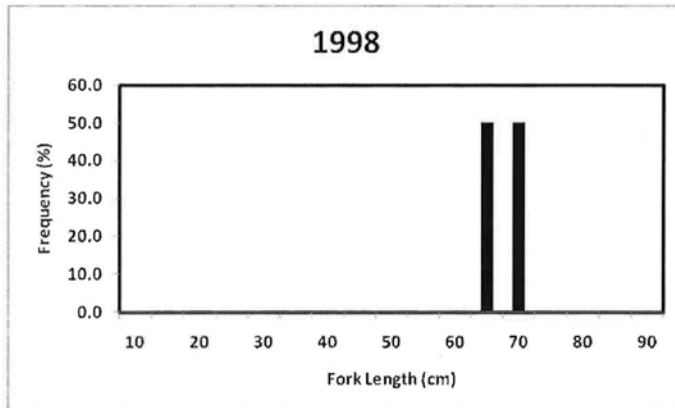


Figure 7. Individual year, 1998 length frequency observations of bocaccio from trained samplers in Puget Sound.

Further evidence of a Georgia Basin DPS, the BRT states, is that the 1999 year class that was evident on the California coast should have been evident in Puget Sound if bocaccio on the coast were a source for bocaccio in Puget Sound:



Ms. Donna Darm  
December 14, 2009  
Page 8

“Finally, the BRT noted that the 1999 year class which dominated coastal bocaccio populations was not apparent in the size frequency data in Puget Sound/Georgia Basin. The BRT interpreted this as evidence that the coastal and Puget Sound-Georgia Strait populations were not highly connected, and thus consisted of two discrete units.” (Page 47)

We do not agree with this conclusion. The documented 1999 strong year class was evident in the southern portion of the California Current system<sup>6</sup>. The presence of a strong year class in northern portions of their range has not been documented. Also not documented is the relationship between coastal recruitment events and possible recruitment into Puget Sound given dependencies such as climate, ocean currents, and fish behavior. In all, we feel the reliance of length frequency information and the analysis does not provide any support for the conclusion that there is a viable population of bocaccio in Puget Sound.

The absence of larvae or post-settlement of bocaccio larvae in Puget Sound is consistent with a conclusion that a viable population of bocaccio does not exist in the Georgia Basin. Early juvenile stages of juvenile bocaccio are commonly observed in nearshore waters of California<sup>7</sup>, yet despite SCUBA, beach seine, bottom trawl, and many other surveys, early juvenile stages of bocaccio have not been detected in Puget Sound as summarized by Garrison and Miller<sup>8</sup> in at least 14 major studies including groundfish conducted in Puget Sound since 1977. Since 1987, the Department has conducted 4,000 bottom trawl, dive, and drop camera surveys and have not detected juvenile or adult bocaccio. We stated this view in our letter of June 22, that there is no direct evidence that young-of-the-year (YOY) bocaccio have been detected in Puget Sound, and this corroborates the lack of a viable population of bocaccio in Puget Sound.

The ambiguity of population structure information and the lack of evidence for self-sustaining populations of bocaccio demonstrate the need to reconsider the listing of this species as endangered. We believe that NOAA's Species of Concern program is an appropriate alternative for highlighting the concerns and research needs for bocaccio. As noted by NOAA, “Species of Concern” are those species about which NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has some concerns regarding status and threats, but for which insufficient information is available to indicate a need to list the species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). We wish to draw proactive attention and conservation

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<sup>6</sup> MacCall, A.D. 2008. Status of bocaccio off California in 2007. Pacific Fishery Management Council Status of Stocks Document. Portland, Oregon.

<sup>7</sup> Love, M.S., J.E. Caselle, and K. Herbinson. 1998. Declines in nearshore rockfish recruitment and populations in the southern California Bight as measured by impingement rates in coastal electrical power generating stations. Fishery Bulletin 96:492-501.

<sup>8</sup> Garrison, K.J., and B.S. Miller. 1982. Review of the early life history of Puget Sound fishes. Fisheries Research Institute, University of Washington. Report FRI-UW-8216. 729 p.

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Ms. Donna Darm  
December 14, 2009  
Page 9

action to these species.” It is our understanding that bocaccio has already been identified as a Species of Concern in the southern part of their range.

The Department is currently considering strong management measures to reduce directed and unintentional fishing and other impacts on rockfish. A Puget Sound Rockfish Conservation Plan is outlining strong precautionary measures for restoration of rockfishes in Puget Sound. Companion regulations eliminating recreational rockfish harvest and prohibiting bottomfishing in depths of 120 feet and greater are being considered for adoption by the Fish and Wildlife Commission in February 2010.

We believe that bocaccio as a Species of Concern, and the strong conservation measures for rockfish will protect bocaccio in Puget Sound and provide for research to establish stock status and structure.

Sincerely,



Philip Anderson  
Director

cc: Garth Griffin, NOAA Protected Resources Division  
Jim Scott, Assistant Director, Fish Program

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**King County**

**Department of  
Natural Resources and Parks**  
Director's Office  
King Street Center  
201 South Jackson Street, Suite 700  
Seattle, WA 98104-3855

June 22, 2009

Chief  
Protected Resources Division, Northwest Region  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1201 NE Lloyd Boulevard – Suite 1100  
Portland, OR 97232

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to provide King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks' formal comments on the April 23, 2009 proposal by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to list several Distinct Population Segments (DPSs) of rockfish in the Puget Sound under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Under the direction of former King County Executive Ron Sims and current King County Executive Kurt Triplett, King County has been a leader in natural resource conservation efforts in King County and in the Puget Sound region. As a general purpose local government, King County implements a range of policies, programs and projects intended to perform the day-to-day functions of government while protecting and restoring our natural heritage. While fulfilling these responsibilities, we remain committed to the protection of species, restoration of habitat, and maintaining and improving environmental quality.

**King County Programs Relevant to Rockfish Management**

King County has great interest in the need to list and recover these fish given the range of our current and planned activities that will protect and restore Puget Sound. We believe the implementation of these programs will contribute to improving the health of rockfish populations. They include efforts to treat wastewater, reduce combined sewer overflows (CSOs), remediate contaminated sediments, and manage stormwater. They also include management of land use in the saltwater shoreline area around Vashon Island and the management of stormwater in unincorporated King County that eventually reaches Puget Sound via rivers and streams. These program areas are addressed in brief in the following paragraphs.



Chief  
Protected Resources Division, Northwest Region  
June 22, 2009  
Page 2

### ***Wastewater Treatment***

King County provides regional wastewater treatment services for about 1.5 million residents. As part of providing these services, King County currently operates four treatment plants, two reclaimed water facilities, four CSO treatment facilities, and several CSO outfalls. In addition, we are currently constructing a fifth treatment plant, the Brightwater Treatment Plant, in southern Snohomish County. This plant will provide a very high level of treatment and incorporate the production of reclaimed water, lessening the eventual flow of treated wastewater into the Puget Sound. The plant is anticipated to come on line in 2011 at a cost of about \$1.8 billion, and its expedited implementation will be a key factor in the region's ability to maintain and improve water quality as the human population continues to grow.

King County has been implementing a CSO reduction program since 1988 to eliminate and or minimize the discharge of untreated wastewater during heavy rain. This program has encompassed several large projects to control overflows, and includes development of a long term CSO control plan. As part of the wastewater system, King County also operates a strong pre-treatment program to address toxic discharges from industries, and has piloted several take-back programs that prevent toxics from entering the wastewater treatment system in the first place.

King County is also committed to effective and targeted sediment cleanup activities, in the lower Duwamish, Elliott Bay, and any other locations where we share responsibility for such cleanup. Given that rockfish can accumulate high concentrations of toxics due to their position in the food web, cleanup of contaminated sediments is likely to have positive effects on the species proposed for listing. In conjunction with other parties, we have initiated several cleanup activities and are proceeding to do more.

We believe all of these activities – investments in state of the art wastewater infrastructure, combined sewer overflow projects, and sediment cleanup projects – will provide a significant net benefit to rockfish through the water quality improvements they will likely provide. It is possible that some temporary effects on a small amount of habitat may occur during construction of some CSO facilities. We believe that through the use of best management practices these effects will be short in duration and that no permanent habitat alteration will result. In sum, the Brightwater project will eventually reduce the amount of treated effluent that is released to Puget Sound by recycling water into uses formerly requiring potable water taken from our rivers and aquifers.

Should a recovery planning process result from this listing proposal, it will be important to develop management strategies that facilitate – rather than hinder – the implementation of these projects. Moreover, these cleanup activities are and will continue to be challenged by unanticipated financial pressures. For example, state toxics control funding targeted for such activities has recently been reduced due to competing pressures for this

Chief  
Protected Resources Division, Northwest Region  
June 22, 2009  
Page 3

funding. Regional ratepayers bear the significant costs of these activities, including the \$1.8 billion Brightwater Treatment Plant capital investment. For this reason, it will be important to proceed expeditiously but strategically, targeting actions and resources based careful application of the best available science.

#### ***Stormwater Management***

King County has provided effective programs to manage stormwater runoff caused by land development for more than 20 years. The goal of these programs is to protect people and natural resources from damage caused by uncontrolled runoff and pollutants in stormwater. As surface water runoff, or stormwater, flows across the landscape, it typically picks up various pollutants, including pesticides, fertilizers, pet wastes, oils and metals from vehicles, and many other chemicals. These pollutants can disrupt ecosystem processes, and also threaten public health. Runoff can also cause erosion, create higher peak flows and velocities in streams and rivers in winter and, because of reduced infiltration, create lower, often slower flows in summer.

Through the implementation of King County's Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) as required by the NPDES Phase I Municipal Stormwater Permit, the County is taking numerous steps that protect habitat and preserve and improve water quality. The SWMP describes the actions the County is taking to avoid, reduce, and repair damages caused by the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff. These include: reviewing development plans for stormwater controls, inspecting construction sites for erosion and sediment controls, building and retrofitting stormwater control structures, inspecting businesses for stormwater pollutant source control, preventing illicit discharges and illegal dumping, and mandating pollution-preventing controls on typical operations and maintenance activities. Development and implementation of the SWMP has brought about a new level of internal King County coordination on activities and issues related to stormwater with the goal of improving water quality in the Puget Sound region. More information regarding the SWMP can be found at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/wlr/stormwaterprogram.aspx>.

#### ***Saltwater Shoreline Land Use Management***

King County develops and implements comprehensive land use plans and regulations to manage land uses along freshwater and saltwater shorelines. Beginning in the 1970s, under direction of the Washington Shoreline Management Act (SMA), King County's Shoreline Master Program (SMP) has protected the marine shorelines along Vashon Island and the larger rivers and lakes covered by the SMA. In the 1980s King County expanded these efforts with its first Comprehensive Plan that directed growth to urban areas of the county and limited the nature and intensity of development in rural areas and where there were significant environmental resources. In the 1990s King County adopted additional regulations to specifically protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as

Chief  
Protected Resources Division, Northwest Region  
June 22, 2009  
Page 4

wetlands and streams not covered by the SMA. These regulations have been updated on a regular bases, with a major update taking effect in January 2005. King County is also in the process of updating its 30 year old SMP and expects to adopt it in 2010. Detailed information about the application of these regulations in saltwater shoreline areas can be found at these web pages:

- King County's Comprehensive Plan:  
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/property/permits/codes/growth/CompPlan.aspx>
- King County's current CAO:  
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/property/permits/codes/CAO.aspx>
- King County's current SMP:  
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/shorelines>

#### **Concerns Regarding Elements of the Listing Proposal Document**

We encourage greater clarity in the characterization of impacts on rockfish relative to what is presented in the Federal Register notice, given the importance of grounding potential future recovery strategies on a strong technical foundation. For example, we believe the characterization of nutrient issues and dissolved oxygen problems in Puget Sound is exceedingly broad and likely to be misinterpreted. It is clear that dissolved oxygen problems occur in certain parts of Puget Sound in certain times of the year. The extent, causes, and locations of these nutrient problems, and appropriate management actions to address them, are currently being actively investigated by the Washington Department of Ecology through a range of studies, supported by the Puget Sound Partnership. We believe it is important to highlight the variability of these problems across Puget Sound, rather than infer that they accrue uniformly. Given the variability of dissolved oxygen problems and the potentially high cost of control strategies, it is highly likely that successful control strategies will require careful targeting of activities where they will be effective.

The notice also states that in-water construction of major infrastructure projects such as sewers is presumed to be a threat to rockfish habitat. We suggest that the final listing decision document make distinctions between the potential for habitat disturbance during time-limited construction activities of any kind, and the ongoing presence and operation of essential public infrastructure which, when in operation, often has no effect on rockfish use of habitat areas.

We would also encourage the presentation of additional detail regarding the level of scientific consensus on the emerging topics of reproductive dysfunction and other sub-lethal affects as a result of contaminant exposure. While King County and other entities are working to better understand these effects, there is much that is unknown in this area of study. In light of the current level of uncertainty, we encourage NMFS to ensure that attribution of impacts on rockfish from contaminant exposure be based on scientifically demonstrated evidence, and to

Chief  
Protected Resources Division, Northwest Region  
June 22, 2009  
Page 5

provide perspective on where advances in the science would improve our understanding of the potential for such impacts on rockfish.

Finally, we encourage specific attention during this listing decision process to the effects of climate change on the health of the rockfish populations at issue. Numerous recent studies and reports have alluded to present and future habitat and species impacts in Puget Sound from climate change. We suggest that the listing decision process incorporate direct characterization and consideration of climate change effects on rockfish.

**King County Data Relevant to the Listing Proposal**

King County has gathered data and completed studies that may be of interest in regards to the listing proposal, relating to the abundance, distribution, and habitat for rockfish in Puget Sound. We wish to make you aware of this information in the event that it may be useful in NMFS' decision processes. Such data is presented in several King County documents, including these two that we have enclosed on a CD:

- Summary report of data from trawl surveys in Elliot Bay and the Duwamish River (from the contaminated sediment cleanup activities), which may be helpful in defining critical habitat.
- Marine Habitat Report, prepared in support of the Wastewater Treatment Divisions Habitat Conservation Plan and the Brightwater Outfall Siting Survey

These two reports, in addition to several other reports relating in varying degrees to rockfish and their habitat in proximity to wastewater system activities in saltwater, can also be found at <http://green.kingcounty.gov/marine/Reports.aspx>. Reports found under the heading "Brightwater Marine Outfall Studies" are likely to be the most relevant to this process.

**Comments Regarding Recovery Planning**

Finally, while it is premature to address the specifics of recovery planning for rockfish pending the outcome of NMFS' listing decision process, I do encourage NMFS to build on relevant regional and local habitat protection and restoration efforts that could contribute to rockfish recovery should a listing take place. I point specifically to the Puget Sound Partnership's 2020 Action Agenda and the watershed-based salmon recovery plans. The Action Agenda likely encompasses many activities that would be important to rockfish recovery, and it represents a degree of regional and local consensus around these activities that should serve as a foundation for recovery efforts. The salmon plans similarly provide some foundation for rockfish recovery planning, from the actions they contain that could contribute to improved water quality and shoreline habitat conditions to the notion that local communities can play an important supporting role in developing and implementing recovery strategies.

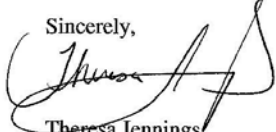
The prospect of a rockfish listing under the ESA is yet another reminder that there is much work to be done in the Puget Sound region to sustain the natural resources that are integral to

[Type text]

Chief  
Protected Resources Division, Northwest Region  
June 22, 2009  
Page 6

Pacific Northwest culture and quality of life. I extend my thanks for the opportunity to comment on this listing proposal. I look forward to hearing your agency's conclusions about the need to afford these fish the protections of the ESA. Please feel free to contact me at (206)296-6500 if there are questions about these comments or if additional information regarding any of the programs described here would be helpful to you.

Sincerely,



Theresa Jennings  
Director

cc: The Honorable Kurt Triplett, King County Executive  
Barry Thom, Acting Regional Administrator, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service  
Isabel Tinoco, Natural Resources Director, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe  
Terry Williams, Natural Resources Director, Tulalip Tribes  
Joe Anderson, Fisheries Director, Puyallup Tribe  
Rob Purser, Fisheries Director, Suquamish Tribe  
David Dicks, Executive Director, Puget Sound Partnership  
Phil Anderson, Interim Director, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Peter Goldmark, Washington Commissioner of Public Lands  
The Honorable Dow Constantine, Chair, King County Council  
The Honorable Larry Phillips, King County Councilmember



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## ***External Peer Review***

Peer review was solicited from experts in rockfish biology and conservation biology. Six individuals agreed to provide reviews, although we only actually received four reviews. Reviewers were: Dr. Milton Love (University of California, Santa Barbara), Dr. Donald Gunderson (University of Washington), Dr. Leah Gerber (Arizona State University), Dr. J. Wilson White (University of California, Davis). Reviews are provided below (in no particular order and not associated with a particular reviewer).

### ***Reviewer 1***

Six factors are listed as considerations by NMFS in listing decisions. How do these differ from the 5 factors specified in the ESA? In general the narrative that goes with each of the 6 factors considered by NMFS is very general and not specific to rockfish. Maybe this is because data are lacking, but it could be condensed and focused on including key information (or mention that there are no data in each category). E.g., describe trend data that are available

Pg. 52 and beyond: should "absolute numbers" be "absolute abundance"? Also, how can one say anything about extinction risk without having an idea of abundance (even with wide CI's)?

Pg. 56: It sounds like "expert opinion" was used to rank demographic risk. This could be strengthened if bit more attention is given to the methods in ranking criteria. Social scientists worry about things like uncertainty in how various metrics are ranked. This is not my field but I have been scrutinized in similar endeavors. Ben Halpern and Carrie Kappell have some published approaches, and I am sure a look at the social science literature could strengthen this approach.

I am skeptical about applying a trend analysis to "total rockfish" (i.e., applying analysis to combined species). Given the paucity of data, I can see why this approach was employed, but it seems like it could be misleading if the relative trends are different among species (which seems likely).

Fig. 33 legend indicates that different colors were used to show which data were treated as separate pops, but I am only seeing one color. The legend also is a little unclear (some typos), so it's hard to figure out what the figs represent. I think the figure is showing trends for combined data, which has merit because it confirms that these populations seem to be declining. But I am still hesitant about performing any kind of extinction risk analysis for combined species data for the reason mentioned above.

I realize that a lot of creative work went into these analyses, and they are really impressive given that there are so few data. The analyses certainly provide a strong basis for taking management action for these

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species (e.g., listing under the ESA). When you start developing a recovery plan and criteria, you could consider a more general approach that does not rely on quantitative analyses that are potentially flawed due to sparse data. A general approach would set recovery criteria and objectives independent of data in hand, and then specify that, species should be listed until data are available to show recovery (i.e, a precautionary approach). It might be worthwhile to consider the recently developed white abalone recovery plan:  
<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/recovery/whiteabalone.pdf>.

[Type text]

## **Reviewer--2**

Dear Dr. Levin,

As you requested, I have reviewed the draft ESA status review of Puget Sound rockfish. Overall, I found the status review to be soundly reasoned and to employ the best available statistical techniques and scientific interpretation to the available data on these species. I must agree with the Biological Review Team (BRT) that the data available for this type of evaluation are sorely lacking, especially in terms of genetic evidence for evaluating the DPS determinations and in terms of the abundance data available for examining population trends and extinction risk. However, it appears that the BRT has been careful in extrapolating from the available data to make conservative inferences regarding the five species in question.

At your request, I paid special attention to the evaluation of extinction risk in my review. There are two potential difficulties with this analysis. First is that abundance data for the individual species are not sufficient for independent analysis, particularly for species that historically made up a small proportion of the overall rockfish fishery and for species that have had catch restrictions imposed and thus have no recent fishery-dependent data. The remedy for this difficulty proposed by the BRT is to analyze the long-term trend in overall rockfish abundance, recognizing that this trend is driven primarily by more abundant species but could serve as an estimate of the trend in the rarer petitioned species. Clearly this is quite a striking assumption, and any number of factors could produce violations of the assumption. However, this approach should produce a conservative estimate of the trend in the petitioned species (i.e., the actual trend is probably more negative than that identified here). Changes in gear and switches in the targeted species should tend to prolong high catch levels in a multispecies time series, so an observed decline in overall catch probably reflects steeper declines in the actual abundance of individual fishes. Furthermore, in the petitioned species for which data were available, the proportion of the overall catch appears to have declined in recent years. Provided that this does not reflect a change in the species-specific targeting of the recreational fisheries (which seems unlikely), this suggests that the multispecies data would again be an optimistic estimate of the rate of decline. One caveat should be that the overall rockfish trend should not necessarily be representative of species that are completely closed to fishing, such as canary rockfish since 2002. The BRT notes that there was not a trend for declining canary rockfish abundance since 2002 in the REEF surveys; has there been any evidence for a temporal increase in those surveys?

[Type text]

The second difficulty in the extinction risk analysis is the presence of multiple data sources that should have different error structures and different relationships to the overall mean abundance. The state-space model approach taken by the BRT is an excellent solution to the problem, and they appear to have chosen appropriate specifications for the model. The model fits to the data appear quite good (although considering the number of potential parameters in the model, a good fit is to be expected). My largest concern with this modeling approach is that it assumes a temporally stationary population growth rate (parameter  $a$ ). This presumes that the overall rockfish "population" is either declining to extinction ( $a < 0$ ) or rising to a non-zero steady-state equilibrium ( $a > 0$ ). The model is therefore constrained to identify an overall negative or positive trend in the data, and cannot represent behavior such as a decline to a minimum followed by subsequent increase. This assumption is probably reasonable for the current state of the Puget sound rockfish community. However, if some sort of intervention were to change the demographics in the study region, such as a large scale change in fishing regulations or environmental mitigation in response to ESA classification, this same analysis would be inappropriate for the analysis of future datasets. Rather than identifying a deterministic change in recent abundances, this type of model would fit positive observation and process error terms to those recent years. To deal with that situation, future analyses would require a temporally variable parameter  $a$ , or a three-parameter model that includes an intrinsic growth parameter and an exploitation parameter. I add this comment not necessarily as a criticism of the current approach (after all, there is pretty convincing evidence for a long-term decline in Fig. 36-37, even without the model fits), but rather as a clarification that should be made for future investigators who may desire to revisit this analysis in the future.

In addition to these major comments, I had a number of specific comments that I itemize below.

p. 16: "myctophids" is misspelled

p. 27, second paragraph: probably better to say that eelgrass and seaweed habitat support most "species" in the sound, rather than most "populations."

p. 38: This is a very nice explanation of the benefits of mitochondrial DNA evidence. I recommend clarifying at some point in this discussion that microsatellites are nuclear markers.

p. 41: With respect to the comparison with other rockfish species in Puget sound, this seems like a very reasonable approach for making inferences regarding the genetic structure of the petitioned species. I would add that given the apparent level of development and swimming abilities of rockfish larvae and post-larvae, it is probably reasonable to err on the side of shorter rather than longer larval dispersal distances.

p. 42: It is not clear what should be made of the comparison with the non-rockfish species in the sound. Are there reasons, based on spawning behavior, spawning season, or larval life history, that the petitioned rockfish species should be more or less like any of the non-rockfish species mentioned here?

p. 45: "were" not "where"

p. 69: Summary of methods: rephrase as "...using a maximum likelihood approach to fit..."

p. 70: Ward et al. 2008 and Shumway & Stoffer 2006 are missing from the references.

[Type text]

p. 70: To be clear, R is constant with time, and D represents fixed factors, not random variates, correct?

p. 73: What sort of model selection was used to compare the one vs. multiple population process models?

p. 76: It is reasonable to point out the importance of ontogenetic changes in fecundity, but there is no reason that those variations cannot be included in a calculation of LEP, and LEP can then be used in the standard way (comparison to a biological reference point or to the slope of the stock-recruit curve). It is correct that variation in the relationship between biomass and fecundity would invalidate the use of SSB. On the same point, is the issue of the seasonal timing of reproduction relevant to Puget sound populations? I am only familiar with that type of argument being used in open coast populations for which the timing of spawning relative to upwelling transitions, etc. is very important.

p. 76. On the topic of LEP, I was somewhat surprised that extinction risk analysis did not incorporate some of the traditional approaches to evaluating population persistence, such as a comparison of LEP to the compensation ratio. Since the relative value of those two measures is a fundamental measure of the long-term persistence of a population, that comparison would be very useful. Are estimates of these values not available for the petitioned species?

Overall, I found this status review to be a sensible and well-reasoned analysis given the limited data available.

### **Reviewer 3**

I found this to be a comprehensive review of the status of the rockfish stocks in question. This was a difficult undertaking, since the review team had very little data to work with.

However, the lack of genetic studies pertinent to the species of concern led the team to generalize from what is known about other rockfish, notably the more well-studied copper, quillback and brown rockfish. All three of these species are known to mate and spawn in Puget Sound, and to be highly restricted in their migrations as adults. Recent genetic analyses suggest that many of their larvae may drift no more than a few tens of kilometers after parturition. This is probably not the case for bocaccio or canary rockfish, and a different model is more appropriate.

Bocaccio and canary rockfish probably have a life history that is more similar to species like yellowtail or splitnose rockfish. Both have large populations in offshore waters, and Puget Sound is likely a sink for larvae that drift in. While splitnose larvae are commonly found in drifting kelp mats, adults are rare throughout most of Puget Sound proper. Most yellowtail rockfish in Puget Sound are immature, migrating to the ocean once they reach sexual maturity (see Barker and Mathews 1983, Gunderson and Vetter 2006). I am not aware of any reported mating or spawning of splitnose or yellowtail rockfish in either Puget Sound proper or the San Juan Islands.

Without further genetic study, and documentation of both mating and spawning in Puget Sound, there is no reason to suppose that the bocaccio and canary rockfish there constitute a population segment that is distinct from the ocean population. Populations within Puget Sound are more likely to be sink populations that exist only through sporadic recruitment of larvae from ocean sources.

Despite the lack of genetic analyses for yelloweye rockfish in Puget Sound proper, the Canadian work cited (Yamanaka et al.) is consistent with the existence of distinct population segments in the ocean and protected waters. However, we still have no way of knowing if the yellowtail population in Puget Sound constitutes a population segment that is distinct from fish in the

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Strait of Georgia. If the yellowtail in Puget Sound constitute a DPS, the teams assessment probably understates the degree to which they are at risk.

The team's analysis indicates that yelloweye rockfish were once plentiful in greater Puget Sound (Kincaid 1919). This is consistent with Yamanaka et al. 2006, who cited an 1886 report of "plentiful" "large red rock cod" in the Strait of Georgia, the most abundant and highly prized being "the red cod or snapper". A century of commercial and recreational fishing on this highly prized species has taken an enormous toll on the yellowtail rockfish population, yet the review team is unable to determine the true magnitude of the decline given data that goes no further back than the 1980s. This is the "sliding baseline" phenomenon in one of its clearest manifestations.

Rather than rely on recreational catch data of uncertain reliability, or bottom trawl surveys that don't target the rocky reefs inhabited by yelloweye rockfish, it would be better to estimate current population distribution and numbers directly, using ROV/camera surveys of known statistical validity. The technology for such surveys is capable of giving reliable results (Pacunski et al. in press, Gunderson et al. 2008; Fisheries 33:172-179), and has already been employed successfully by WDFW (Palsson et al. 2008). Historic abundances could be estimated indirectly using maps of rocky habitat in the appropriate depth range, and inferring the densities (number per square meter) that once occurred there. These inferences could be made using some combination of known current densities in un-fished areas and anecdotal information provided by fishermen who were active in the 1950's.

#### ***Reviewer 4***

I have gone over the draft ESA status review of Puget Sound Rockfishes.

I was impressed with the thought that has gone into the process leading to the document and I think I would have come to the same conclusions.

Really, given the shortage of data on some of these species, this was the best work that one could have expected.

[Type text]

## Appendix F – Response to reviews

### *Responses to peer reviews*

Comment	Response
<b>External Reviewer 1</b>	
Pg. 52 and beyond: should “absolute numbers” be “absolute abundance”?	We altered the text to read absolute abundance
How can one say anything about extinction risk without having an idea of abundance (even with wide CI’s)?	Quantitative criteria for listing species do not always rely on “risk of hitting 0 numbers”. Another criteria used is the rate of decline and an observed or projected severe decline. Examples include the IUCN Red-List risk criteria and the AFSC listing criteria. Severe declines, 80-99%, are considered reason for high conservation concern – if such declines persist extinction is certain. If no accurate numbers are available, one must rely on the information available, such as how often the species is observed, to form an expert opinion concerning whether the species is sparse, rare, or extremely rare.
Pg. 56: It sounds like “expert opinion” was used to rank demographic risk. This could be strengthened if bit more attention is given to the methods in ranking criteria. Social scientists worry about things like uncertainty in how various metrics are ranked. This is not my field but I have been scrutinized in similar endeavors. Ben Halpern and Carrie Kappell have some published approaches, and I am sure a look at the social science literature could strengthen this approach.	We used standard, established and peer-reviewed methods employed by NMFS for other status reviews including salmonids, Pacific hake, walleye Pollock, Pacific cod, Pacific Herring, black abalone, and copper, quillback and brown rockfishes.
I am skeptical about applying a trend analysis to “total rockfish” (i.e., applying analysis to combined species). Given the	This, and a similar comment by external review #2 are a misinterpretation of the approach we used. Importantly, we did not



<p>paucity of data, I can see why this approach was employed, but it seems like it could be misleading if the relative trends are different among species (which seems likely).</p>	<p>make the assumption that the total trend is an estimate of the trend is the rarer species. The logic is as follows:</p> $N\_rare(t) = (N\_rare(t) / N\_total(t)) * N\_total(t)$ <p>If <math>N\_rare(t)/N\_total(t)</math> is constant, then the trend in <math>N\_total =</math> the trend in <math>N\_rare</math>.          If <math>N\_rare(t)/N\_total(t)</math> has been going down, then the rare spp is going down faster than the total.          If <math>N\_rare(t)/N\_total(t)</math> has been going up, then the rare spp is not going down as fast as the total.</p> <p>The analysis consisted of</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Evaluating the trend in the total rockfish abundance using all available data and multiple ways of looking at the data.</li> <li>2) Evaluating the evidence that the prevalence of each rare species has been going up relative to the total (has <math>N\_rare/N\_total</math> been increasing).</li> </ol> <p>We have edited the text in several places to clarify this.</p>
<p>Fig. 33 legend indicates that different colors were used to show which data were treated as separate pops, but I am only seeing one color. The legend also is a little unclear (some typos), so it's hard to figure out what the figs represent. I think the figure is showing trends for combined data, which has merit because it confirms that these populations seem to be declining. But I am still hesitant about performing any kind of extinction risk analysis for combined species data for the reason mentioned above.</p>	<p>We updated the figure and text. The new legend reads as follows:</p> <p>Figure 33. The different colors in the bottom panel show which data were treated as separate (but not independent) population processes. Specifically, data from the trawl survey may be sampled from a different segment of the total rockfish assemblage (age or size) than the recreational data. Thus the trawl data are treated as an independent trajectory but with the same long-term growth rate. Each process has the same long-term population growth rate (a parameter) because over the</p>

	<p>long term one segment of a population cannot have a different trend than another segment of the population. But over the short-term, different population segments can certainly have different trajectories. Modeling the trawl data as its own process also allows that this segment of the population could have different process variance than the segment of the population sampled by recreational gear.</p>
<p><b>External reviewer 2</b></p>	
<p>I paid special attention to the evaluation of extinction risk in my review. There are two potential difficulties with this analysis. First is that abundance data for the individual species are not sufficient for independent analysis, particularly for species that historically made up a small proportion of the overall rockfish fishery and for species that have had catch restrictions imposed and thus have no recent fishery-dependent data. The remedy for this difficulty proposed by the BRT is to analyze the long-term trend in overall rockfish abundance, recognizing that this trend is driven primarily by more abundant species but could serve as an estimate of the trend in the rarer petitioned species. Clearly this is quite a striking assumption, and any number of factors could produce violations of the assumption.</p>	<p>As described above for reviewer #1—this is a misinterpretation of the methods.</p> <p>In addition to clarifying the methods, we added the following the text:</p> <p><b>Results</b> Looking at all the data available to us, we found no evidence that the petitioned species make up an increasing fraction of the total rockfish pool over time. Instead, for some species, we found evidence that the species are a smaller percentage of the “total rockfish” over time. Thus we found no evidence to suggest that the petitioned species have increased or been stable while the total rockfish abundance has declined. Instead the evidence points to some species declining faster than the total abundance has.</p> <p><b>Discussion</b> Because time series data on the petitioned species were not available, we could not do a direct quantitative analysis on these species. Instead we were forced to use data on total rockfish trends and trends in the species composition of the total rockfish assemblage. We recognize that the trend in total rockfish does not equal the trend in the petitioned species. However, this does not mean we had no information on trends</p>

[Type text]

	<p>in the petitioned species. Total rockfish abundance has declined and some of the petitioned species (list which ones) have become a smaller proportion of the total rockfish assemblage. This allows us to use the trends in total rockfish as an upper bound on the trends for the petitioned species. This was the approach taken in the analysis.</p>
<p>This approach should produce a conservative estimate of the trend in the petitioned species (i.e., the actual trend is probably more negative than that identified here). Changes in gear and switches in the targeted species should tend to prolong high catch levels in a multispecies time series, so an observed decline in overall catch probably reflects steeper declines in the actual abundance of individual fishes.</p>	<p>This is a good point that we added to the text.</p>
<p>Furthermore, in the petitioned species for which data were available, the proportion of the overall catch appears to have declined in recent years. Provided that this does not reflect a change in the species-specific targeting of the recreational fisheries (which seems unlikely), this suggests that the multispecies data would again be an optimistic estimate of the rate of decline. One caveat should be that the overall rockfish trend should not necessarily be representative of species that are completely closed to fishing, such as canary rockfish since 2002. The BRT notes that there was not a trend for declining canary rockfish abundance since 2002 in the REEF surveys; has there been any evidence for a temporal increase in those surveys</p>	<p>Several good points here which we incorporated in to the trend discussion</p>
<p>The second difficulty in the extinction risk</p>	<p>Given our data constraints, our risk metric</p>

[Type text]

<p>analysis is the presence of multiple data sources that should have different error structures and different relationships to the overall mean abundance. The state-space model approach taken by the BRT is an excellent solution to the problem, and they appear to have chosen appropriate specifications for the model. The model fits to the data appear quite good (although considering the number of potential parameters in the model, a good fit is to be expected).</p> <p>My largest concern with this modeling approach is that it assumes a temporally stationary population growth rate (parameter <math>a</math>). This presumes that the overall rockfish "population" is either declining to extinction (<math>a &lt; 0</math>) or rising to a non-zero steady-state equilibrium (<math>a &gt; 0</math>). The model is therefore constrained to indentify an overall negative or positive trend in the data, and cannot represent behavior such as a decline to a minimum followed by subsequent increase.</p>	<p>was a measure of the long-term trends. Our parameter “<math>a</math>” is effectively the average population growth rate over the entire data set. The analysis does allow that there have been periods of positive population growth but we use for forecasting and risk assessment the long-term average population growth. Although current rates of decline may be less (or more) than the long-term average, a negative long-term population growth means the current population is well below the levels seen 30-50 years ago.</p>
<p>This assumption [<i>from the above comment</i>] is probably reasonable for the current state of the Puget sound rockfish community. However, if some sort of intervention were to change the demographics in the study region, such as a large scale change in fishing regulations or environmental mitigation in response to ESA classification, this same analysis would be inappropriate for the analysis of future datasets.</p>	<p>This is a very hard question to address with noisy data, and we agree with the basic premise of the question. Importantly, however, the forecasting used for petition analyses asks “if trends over the last 30-years continue,...”, and as this reviewer notes one goal of ESA protection would be to ensure that past trends do not continue.</p>
<p>Rather than identifying a deterministic change in recent abundances, this type of model would fit positive observation and process</p>	<p>Agreed</p>

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<p>error terms to those recent years. To deal with that situation, future analyses would require a temporally variable parameter <math>a</math>, or a three-parameter model that includes an intrinsic growth parameter and an exploitation parameter. I add this comment not necessarily as a criticism of the current approach (after all, there is pretty convincing evidence for a long-term decline in Fig. 36-37, even without the model fits), but rather as a clarification that should be made for future investigators who may desire to revisit this analysis in the future.</p>	
<p>p. 16: "myctophids" is misspelled</p>	corrected
<p>p. 27, second paragraph: probably better to say that eelgrass and seaweed habitat support most "species" in the sound, rather than most "populations."</p>	done
<p>p. 38: This is a very nice explanation of the benefits of mitochondrial DNA evidence. I recommend clarifying at some point in this discussion that microsatellites are nuclear markers.</p>	done
<p>p. 41: With respect to the comparison with other rockfish species in Puget sound, this seems like a very reasonable approach for making inferences regarding the genetic structure of the petitioned species. I would add that given the apparent level of development and swimming abilities of rockfish larvae and post-larvae, it is probably reasonable to err on the side of shorter rather than longer larval dispersal distances.</p>	Agreed
<p>It is not clear what should be made of the comparison with the non-rockfish species in the sound. Are there reasons, based on</p>	We added text to clarify this

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spawning behavior, spawning season, or larval life history, that the petitioned rockfish species should be more or less like any of the non-rockfish species mentioned here?	
p. 45: "were" not "where"	fixed
p. 69: Summary of methods: rephrase as "...using a maximum likelihood approach to fit..."	done
p. 70: Ward et al. 2008 and Shumway & Stoffer 2006 are missing from the references.	fixed
It is reasonable to point out the importance of ontogenetic changes in fecundity, but there is no reason that those variations cannot be included in a calculation of LEP, and LEP can then be used in the standard way (comparison to a biological reference point or to the slope of the stock-recruit curve). It is correct that variation in the relationship between biomass and fecundity would invalidate the use of SSB. On the same point, is the issue of the seasonal timing of reproduction relevant to Puget sound populations? I am only familiar with that type of argument being used in open coast populations for which the timing of spawning relative to upwelling transitions, etc. is very important.	<p>We agree with the statement that calculation of LEP can be adjusted to account for ontogenetic changes in fecundity, and this is mentioned in the text.</p> <p>The purpose of pointing out the importance of maternal effects here is to state that rockfish populations seems particularly sensitive to such age class truncation. We are therefore concerned not only with population decline, but also the modification of population composition</p>
p. 76. On the topic of LEP, I was somewhat surprised that extinction risk analysis did not incorporate some of the traditional approaches to evaluating population	The reviewer is correct that the necessary data were not available to the BRT.

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<p>persistence, such as a comparison of LEP to the compensation ratio. Since the relative value of those two measures is a fundamental measure of the long-term persistence of a population, that comparison would be very useful. Are estimates of these values not available for the petitioned species?</p>	
<p><b>Reviewer 3</b></p>	
<p>I found this to be a comprehensive review of the status of the rockfish stocks in question. This was a difficult undertaking, since the review team had very little data to work with.</p> <p>However, the lack of genetic studies pertinent to the species of concern led the team to generalize from what is known about other rockfish, notably the more well-studied copper, quillback and brown rockfish. All three of these species are known to mate and spawn in Puget Sound, and to be highly restricted in their migrations as adults. Recent genetic analyses suggest that many of their larvae may drift no more than a few tens of kilometers after parturition. This is probably not the case for bocaccio or canary rockfish, and a different model is more appropriate.</p>	<p>We agree that copper, quillback and brown may have shorter larval lives than bocaccio and canary. However, all species are subject to hydrological restrictions that certainly have a large effect on dispersal distance.</p>
<p>Bocaccio and canary rockfish probably have a life history that is more similar to species like yellowtail or splitnose rockfish. Both have large populations in offshore waters, and Puget Sound is likely a sink for larvae that drift in. While splitnose larvae are commonly found in drifting kelp mats, adults are rare throughout most of Puget Sound proper. Most yellowtail rockfish in Puget Sound are immature, migrating to the ocean once they reach sexual maturity (see Barker and</p>	<p>The basic premise of this comment seems to be that Puget Sound represents a sink population. That is, there is no spawning of bocaccio or canary in the Sound. This is certainly a valid hypothesis and did gain a minority of support in the BRT's DPS deliberations. However, the reviewer offers no direct evidence of this hypothesis for bocaccio and canary rockfish.</p> <p>In the absence of direct evidence of population structure, the BRT reasoned that</p>

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<p>Mathews 1983, Gunderson and Vetter 2006). I am not aware of any reported mating or spawning of splitnose or yellowtail rockfish in either Puget Sound proper or the San Juan Islands.</p> <p>Without further genetic study, and documentation of both mating and spawning in Puget Sound, there is no reason to suppose that the bocaccio and canary rockfish there constitute a population segment that is distinct from the ocean population. Populations within Puget Sound are more likely to be sink populations that exist only through sporadic recruitment of larvae from ocean sources.</p>	<p>if Puget Sound was a sink population that is seeded with larvae from coastal populations then the age structure of Puget Sound and coastal populations should be similar. As the BRT report notes, this does not appear to be the case. In revision, the BRT expanded and clarified this analysis. In particular, the analyses shows that the existence of strong year classes in Puget Sound that were absent along the coast, as well as strong coastal year classes that are missing from Puget Sound.</p>
<p><b>Reviewer 4</b></p>	
<p>I have gone over the draft ESA status review of Puget Sound Rockfishes. I was impressed with the thought that has gone into the process leading to the document and I think I would have come to the same conclusions. Really, given the shortage of data on some of these species, this was the best work that one could have expected.</p>	<p>No response needed</p>



## **Responses to Public Comments**

Comment	Response
<b>Western States Petroleum Association</b>	
<p>The WSPA criticized the scientific foundations of the proposed listings.</p>	<p>The comments of the WSPA suggest that they did not fully understand the logic and rigor of the approach adopted by the BRT. As discussed above, the document has been edited to increase clarity.</p> <p>As we previously discussed quantitative criteria for listing species do not always rely on “risk of hitting 0 numbers”. Another criteria used is the rate of decline and an observed or projected severe decline. The time to extinction (or functional extinction) depends on the current numbers but not whether extinction occurs.</p>
<p>The WSPA also commented on the role of environmental contaminants as a factor in the species decline</p>	<p>We agree with the WSPA that there is not conclusive evidence suggesting that water quality is a limiting factor affecting the specific species addressed by the BRT. Instead, the BRT relied on the rich body of literature that suggests that various contaminants can affect the health of many fish species. Given the impacts of contaminants on the fish species that have been investigated (including limited work on rockfish), the BRT concluded that there is a clear potential for impact. This conclusion has also been echoed by WDFW.</p>
<b>WDFW (public comments)</b>	
<p>1) <i>Do sufficient data exist?</i>            Given the specifics outlined in the petition to list bocaccio, canary rockfish, and yelloweye rockfish in Puget Sound, the Biological Review Team (BRT) developed</p>	<p>We agree with WDFW that the lack of genetic data on the petitioned species is a limitation. However, given the unique environment and the restricted circulation of Puget Sound, patterns of population</p>

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<p>an appropriate set of possible DPS scenarios. These scenarios fall into two categories: 1) DPSs at varying geographic scales within Puget Sound and Georgia Basin differentiated from coastal DPS(s) (Scenarios 1-3) and 2) a single DPS inclusive of Puget Sound, Georgia Basin, and Washington Coast (Scenario 4). The BRT review determined there was a lack of appropriate information, especially population genetic data, to adequately evaluate population structure for these three petitioned rockfish species stating "it is not possible to make broad statements about the patterns of radiation and divergence" among rockfish species. More specifically, known population differentiation patterns within rockfish species do not appear to fall consistently within phylogenetic clades, ecological groups, or among species occurring within similar oceanographic features. However, we emphasize the importance of the single-DPS hypothesis for the protection and recovery of these species, and urge that the hypothesis be further vetted prior to the final listing decision. We further urge NMFS to renew attempts to locate existing tissue for genetic analysis, confer with regional management and academic authorities, and conduct a thorough literature search prior to making a final listing decision.</p>	<p>structure of the petitioned species in other regions, and patterns of population of other species in Puget Sound led to the DPS determinations of the BRT. Importantly, the results of the DPS determination process highlighted that the lack of data produced some uncertainties, and we agree with the WDFW that additional data would reduce this uncertainty.</p>
<p><i>2) Can assumptions be made from other species?</i> Genetic data from five rockfish populations within Puget Sound, Georgia Basin, or Queen Charlotte Islands exists: the three <i>Pteropodus</i> species considered by NMFS in 2001 (copper, brown, and quillback rockfish; all within Puget Sound), Pacific ocean perch (Queen Charlotte Islands), and yelloweye rockfish (Georgia Basin). Based on genetic</p>	<p>While agreeing with the BRT's selection of DPS, WDFW raises a number of concerns, which we address here (and above).</p> <p>The rare, transient occurrence of a fish in Puget Sound would not constitute grounds for creating a DPS since this would not satisfy the requirements that the population be discrete and significant.</p> <p>Similarly, the presence of only juveniles in the Sound would also not satisfy DPS</p>

<p>analyses, each species showed differentiation between populations within the restricted waters of Puget Sound, Georgia Basin, or Queen Charlotte Islands and outer coast populations. With the exception of the <i>Pteropodus</i> species, these species are not closely related and do not share similar life histories or distributions. However, their occurrence in isolated waters, such as Puget Sound, and the differentiation of these isolated populations from other populations do suggest that the physical environment within Puget Sound and George Basin may restrict gene flow in and out of the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin areas. There is, however, information from other life history research that suggests other modes of distribution and dispersal exist among rockfish occurring in Puget Sound. Eleven of the 28 species of rockfish recorded in Puget Sound have only been observed five times or less until 1980. The BRT presumes that all rockfish within Puget Sound form an inland DPS implying these rare records each constitute a unique DPS. It is more likely that these species stray into Puget Sound from coastal waters. Recent occurrence patterns of vermilion rockfish which were not known from Puget Sound prior to 1980 (Miller and Borton 1980) demonstrate that intrusions from coastal waters dynamically influence species compositions. Yellowtail rockfish appear to only occur as juveniles in the San Juan Islands with subsequent dispersal of adults to coastal waters (Barker 1979). More recent observations of rockfish recruitment confirm that post-larval copper, quillback, and brown rockfish are self-sustaining populations within</p>	<p>requirements.</p> <p>We agree that the presence of multiple age classes could indicate several intrusions of larvae from coastal waters; however, as we noted above, the strong year classes of bocaccio in Puget Sound do not appear to coincide with the strong coastal year classes. The BRT considered this strong support for independence of coastal and Puget Sound populations.</p>
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Puget Sound proper but that black and yellowtail rockfish may recruit to Puget Sound proper as yearlings from adjacent northern waters.

Additionally, whether bocaccio and canary rockfish constitute self-sustaining populations may be questionable. Their early life stages have not been confirmed in Puget Sound (Garrison and Miller (1982) and their documented occurrence in Puget Sound Proper is restricted to less than 24 locations compared to hundreds of records for copper, quill back, and brown rockfish (Washington 1977, Miller and Borton 1980). Evidence that the species occur as self-sustaining populations within Puget Sound is based upon multiple size classes. The occurrence of multiple size classes could equally be explained by success and sporadic recruitment events from coastal waters. Within these hypotheses, assumptions, and patterns is a lack of data to resolve them. The WDFW supports further research and monitoring to remedy this data gap. Recognizing the lack of direct data, the WDFW agrees with the BRT's selection of Scenario 3 for the Georgia Basin DPS as most likely for bocaccio, canary, and yelloweye rockfish. That yelloweye rockfish, a demersal species as an adult, shows isolation between British Columbian inland and coastal populations is strong evidence that precautionary approaches are warranted, and we believe scenario 3 to be the most precautionary DPS designation.

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<p>The WDFW concurs with the general population trend analyses for the three proposed species. These patterns generally follow those of Pals son et al. (DRAFT 2009) that canary, yelloweye, and bocaccio rockfish were generally more common in early time series of species compositions and that catch rates and relative abundances of rockfish have declined. The WDFW cautions that early species identifications may reflect the difficulty of identifying rockfish by lay observers or untrained samplers.</p>	<p>The concern about species identifications has been noted in the BRT report.</p>
<p>The WDFW requests two corrections in the FRN. There is a significant misspelling regarding bocaccio found on Page 18521. The statement that "89%" of the recreational rockfish catch in the late 1970s consisted of bocaccio should read as "8-9%. This statement was attributed to Palsson et al. (2008) but these authors did not make this statement. The draft BRT report by Drake et al. (2008) should be credited with this statement that was drawn from dated Washington Department of Fisheries (WDF) Sport Catch Reports.</p>	<p>This was an error in the FRN, but not the BRT report.</p>
<p>The WDFW concurs with the conclusion that overutilization for commercial and recreational purposes is the most severe threat to petitioned rockfish in the Georgia Basin (74 FR 18534). The WDFW acknowledges that past fisheries have contributed to the decline of bocaccio, canary, and yelloweye rockfish.</p>	<p>noted</p>
<p>The BRT identified habitat destruction as a</p>	<p>The BRT report does not state that there</p>

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<p>threat to petitioned rockfish (71 FR 18533). In particular, loss of rocky habitat, loss of eelgrass and kelp, introduction of non-native species that modify habitat, and degradation of water quality were identified as specific threats to rockfish habitat in the Georgia Basin. Palsson et al. (<i>DRAFT</i> 2009) does not indicate that loss of rocky habitat has occurred. However, the habitat may be degraded due to the presence of derelict fishing gear or impaired water quality. The impact of hypoxia as a risk to the petitioned rockfish in southern Puget Sound may be overstated in that historical documented occurrences of canary, bocaccio, and yelloweye rockfish do not correspond to areas of poor water quality in southern Puget Sound. It is unclear if these species utilized these habitats prior to their degradation. Furthermore, these species have not been observed during recent massive fish kills in southern Hood Canal (Palsson et al. 2008).</p>	<p>has been loss of rocky habitat, but does not that it can be degraded by construction of bridges, sewer lines and other structures, deployment of cables and pipelines, and by burying from dredge spoils and natural sub tidal slope failures.</p>
<p>The FRN adequately characterizes what is known and not known regarding the impact or threat of toxic contaminants on the proposed rockfish species. The WDFW agrees with the reasonable conclusions regarding the potential for health impacts on these species using what is known regarding exposure of closely related rockfish. In addition, the WDFW agrees with the reasonable conclusions regarding potential reproductive impacts on rockfish using results from non-rockfish species.</p>	<p>noted</p>
<p>The previous paragraph describes potential exposure patterns for benthic feeding rockfish in urban areas however the FRN review indicates that all three petitioned species appear to rely to some degree on pelagic prey. If pelagic prey dominate the diet of a petitioned species it may experience greater</p>	<p>This is now mentioned in the BRT report</p>

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<p>exposure to persistent bioaccumulative toxics (PBTs), across a greater spatial range (not just urban areas). Pelagic prey such as Pacific herring in Puget Sound have unusually high body burdens of PBTs (West and O'Neill 2008); these PBTs biomagnify in their predators (e.g., Chinook salmon --see O'Neill and West 2009). Long life span and residency in Puget Sound, both characteristics of the three petitioned rockfish species, increase the risk of exposure. In addition, environmental levels of legacy PBTs such as polychlorinated biphenyls were probably higher in Puget Sound's pelagic species in the 1970s and 80s (West and O'Neill 2007), the period when the petitioned species declined. If petitioned species consume herring or similar pelagic prey, we believe that PBT contamination may have played a role in their decline, and is a risk factor for their recovery.</p>	
<p><b>WDFW (12-14-09 letter)</b></p>	
<p>The WDFW provided a discussion of genetic and size frequency information as the basis for a suggestion to re-consider the BRT's selection of a Puget Sound/Georgia Basin DPS for bocaccio.</p>	<p>The BRT generally agrees with the crux of the WDFW comments—there appears to be little genetic structure in bocaccio along the coast, and differences in age structure between coastal and Puget Sound populations are difficult to interpret.</p> <p>Given this uncertainty, the WDFW concludes that the Species of Concern program is appropriate for bocaccio.</p> <p>Based on the earlier DPS designations for other Puget Sound rockfishes, the BRT assumed that in the absence of information indicating otherwise, the petition species were likely to have DPS in inland marine waters distinct from coastal populations. Thus, the BRT evaluation consisted of evaluating evidence that supported or contradicted this starting point. After considering the limited evidence, the BRT</p>

	<p>considered the available evidence insufficient to refute the hypothesis of an inland DPS. However, in agreement with WDFW, the BRT noted there was uncertainty in this conclusion, and this was reflected in the DPS voting—a significant minority of the votes were cast for a coastal DPS.</p>
<p>The WDFW presented the Field et al. (2009) reanalysis of the Matala et al. (2004) data to revise the conclusion that bocaccio exhibit genetic structure among coastal populations.</p>	<p>The BRT agrees that bocaccio show markedly lower population structure along coastal populations compared to several other rockfish species. There are examples of a number of species, however, that show structure between Puget Sound and/or Georgia Basin and the outer Washington Coast but little structure along the coast (Pacific Ocean perch, copper, quillback, and brown rockfish, as well as herring and hake). There remain no data addressing potential genetic differentiation between Puget Sound and coastal populations.</p> <p>While Field et al. do provide a re-analysis of Matala et al., the BRT notes that the basic conclusion of Matala et al. remains—there is little genetic structure in coastal populations of bocaccio, and this information was available to the BRT during its deliberations.</p> <p>The BRT also notes that Field et al. state: “Thus, although the failure to identify clear evidence of population genetic structure among bocaccio populations in the Canadian/Northern U.S. region and the southern/central California region suggests that some migratory connectivity exists, the apparent differences in growth rates, size (and presumably age) at maturity, and longevity suggest that some level of demographic independence is likely.” As a result, Field et al. continue to distinguish a northern and southern stock.</p>



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<p>The WDFW argued that length frequency data do not support the conclusion that successful recruitment is occurring in Puget Sound and that the presence of mature individuals and many size (age) classes supports a viable population in Puget Sound.</p>	<p>We agree with the WDFW that interpretation of the length frequency data is ambiguous. The critical point for DPS determination for the BRT related to how this uncertain information was used. The limited information on bocaccio available to the BRT and in the WDFW letter provides uncertain evidence that in some cases supports the hypothesis that Puget Sound and coastal populations are discrete, while in other instances it contradicts the hypothesis. Importantly, however, while the BRT recognized that there is some evidence supporting a coastal DPS, on balance, the BRT did not consider this strong enough to refute the starting assumption of an inland DPS.</p>
<p>The WDFW concluded that the absence of documented post-settlement juveniles or larvae in SCUBA and seine surveys suggested there is no viable population of bocaccio in Puget Sound.</p>	<p>The absence of post-settlement bocaccio in surveys is difficult to interpret, and the BRT does not consider this evidence of a lack of evidence for a viable population of bocaccio in Puget Sound. The WDFW surveys were conducted after the bocaccio population was already very low. Given the extremely episodic nature of bocaccio recruitment and their apparently very low population size the probability of seeing a juvenile bocaccio is extremely low. Thus, it is difficult to know what the absence of post-settlement bocaccio in recent surveys really indicates.</p>
<p>The WDFW argued that the population strong 1999 year class of bocaccio was present in California, but not documented in northern portions of their range. Also not documented is the relationship between coastal recruitment and recruitment in Puget Sound.</p>	<p>The WDFW is correct in noting that the BRT used the bocaccio stock assessment to conclude that 1999 was a strong year coastal year class, and that the stock assessment is performed on the California portion of the stock. Thus, we agree that it could be problematic to conclude that the 1999 year class was strong in the portion of the population off the coast of Washington and British Columbia.</p> <p>The report was revised to more clearly state that the stock assessment focused on the California stock.</p>

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	<p>However, given that strong year classes in several species of rockfish are coherent at scales up to 1000km (Field and Ralston 2005), and that the 1999 year class was strong for a number of northern rockfish (e.g. Stewart , 2007, Hammel 2008), the BRT opted to leave this analysis in the report. In addition, the BRT augmented the original analysis to include an examination of the coherence of other year-classes. Overall, there appears to be little correspondence between age structure inside and outside of Puget Sound. The BRT considers this suggestive (though not conclusive) of an inland DPS.</p>
<b>Sam Wright</b>	
<p>The most serious deficiency is failure to evaluate potential adverse impacts to low abundance rockfish populations due to depensation, especially the sub-set of depensatory mortality factors commonly known as Allee effects.</p>	<p>Allee effects are included in the general discussion of extinction risk. This has been clarified in revision.</p>
<p>The only other serious problem is in your discussion of bycatch, where the language seems to indicate that the most serious concern is with the lingcod fishery. This is incorrect. By a wide margin, the highest bycatch mortality for rockfish occurs in the Puget Sound recreational fishery for "blackmouth".</p>	<p>The reference to lingcod has been removed, and the statement regarding bycatch is now more general. The statement now reads "Rockfish are unintentionally captured as part of fishing activities targeting other species." This paragraph concludes by stated that bycatch of rockfish is thought to be a high impact stressor.</p>
<p>A final point concerns your discussion of releases of propagated fish, where the numbers given for salmon are incorrect. The correct numbers for Chinook salmon are 45.6 million subyearlings and 2.6 million yearlings. Ecological interactions with hatchery Chinook are discussed on pages 9 and 10 of the April 2007 petition.</p>	<p>The figures in the BRT report now mirror those provided by WFDE, and state that hatchery releases of Chinook and coho averaged 21.2 million from 1983-2000 and have declined to around 14 million in recent years.</p>

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## TABLES

**Table 1 Summary of published studies by type of population divisions found. Note that multiple patterns may be evident within a single species.**

<b>Pattern of population structure</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Source</b>
<i>No population structure detected</i>	chilipepper rockfish	Wishard et al. (1980)
	Mexican rockfish	Bernardi et al. (2003); Rocha-Olivares et al. (2000)
	kelp rockfish	Gilbert-Horvath et al. (2006)
<i>Isolation by distance</i>	darkblotched rockfish	Gomez-Uchida & Banks (2005)
	canary rockfish	Wishard et al. (1980)
	goldeye rockfish	Sekino et al. (2001)
	Pacific ocean perch	Wishard et al. (1980); Seeb & Gunderson (1988)
	copper rockfish	Seeb et al. (1998); Buonaccorsi et al. (2002)
	quillback rockfish	Seeb et al. (1998)
	brown rockfish	Seeb et al. (1998); Buonaccorsi et al. (2005)
	kelp rockfish	Taylor (2004)
	grass rockfish	Buonaccorsi et al. (2004)
	<i>Genetic differentiation, but not consistent with isolation by distance</i>	shortraker rockfish
quillback rockfish		Burr (1999)
<i>Influence of oceanographic features</i>	Pacific ocean perch	Withler et al. (2001)
	blue rockfish	Cope (2004)
	grass rockfish	Buonaccorsi et al. (2004)
	vermilion rockfish	Hyde (2007)
	rosethorn rockfish	Rocha-Olivares & Vetter (1999)
	bocaccio	Matala et al. (2004a)
	<i>Possible hybridization</i>	copper rockfish
quillback rockfish		Seeb et al. (1998); Buonaccorsi et al. (2005)
brown rockfish		Seeb et al. (1998); Buonaccorsi et al. (2005)

[Type text]

**Table 2 Summary of studies of genetic differentiation of marine fish that included samples from Puget Sound**

<b>Differentiation Found</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Source</b>
Low	Pacific cod	<i>Gadus macrocephalus</i>	Differentiation on ocean basin scale	Grant et al. 1987
Low	walleye pollock	<i>Theragra chalcogramma</i>	Differentiation on ocean basin scale	O'Reilly et al. 2004
Low	lingcod	<i>Ophiodon elongatus</i>	No differentiation found among Puget Sound, Strait of Juan de Fuca, and coastal Washington populations	LeClair et al. 2006
Medium	herring	<i>Clupea pallasii</i>	Puget Sound and Strait of Georgia populations similar, with 2 exceptions	Small et al. 2005
High	Pacific hake	<i>Merluccius productus</i>	Differentiation found between Puget Sound, Strait of Georgia, and offshore populations	Iwamoto et al. 2004; Utter & Hodgins 1971

[Type text]

**Table 3 Sample worksheet for evaluating potential DPS(s) of Puget Sound rockfishes using the "likelihood point" method (FEMAT 1993)**  
**Table 1. Sample worksheet for evaluating potential DPS(s) of Puget Sound rockfishes using the "likelihood point" method (FEMAT 1993).**

## **Puget Sound rockfish DPS Delineation**

### **FEMAT Method (distribute ten likelihood points among the DPS scenarios)\*\***

Scenario 1: Puget Sound Proper	Scenario 2: Greater Puget Sound	Scenario 3: Puget Sound/ Georgia Basin	Scenario 4: Part of coastal DPS	TOTAL = 10
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\*\* Each Biological Review Team member distributes ten likelihood points among the six DPS scenarios. Placement of all ten points in a given scenario reflects 100% certainty that this is the DPS configuration that incorporates the entire population segment. Distributing points between scenarios reflects uncertainty in whether a given scenario reflects the true DPS delineation



**Table 4 Total rockfish CPUE data from the recreational bottomfish for entire Puget Sound, including Strait of Juan de Fuca. Data estimates average rockfish per trip (total catch in punch card areas 5-13 (6-12 for Buckley and Bargmann) divided by the total trips in areas 5-13 (or 6-12)). Regions 7, 8 and 12 had no data in 1971 and regions 7 and 8 in 1973. Data from Bargmann (1977) and Buckley (1967, 1968, 1970).**

Year	Buckley and Bargmann	Palsson et al. (2008)	Palsson (1988)
1965	0.77		
1966	1.34		
1967	0.29		
1968	0.8		
1969	1.25		
1970	1.23		1.23
1971	0.66		0.56
1972	1.24		1.24
1973	1.16		1.28
1974			1.07
1975			0.84
1976			0.72
1977		1.25	1.12
1978		0.92	0.82
1979		1.00	0.75
1980		0.91	0.80
1981		0.81	0.58
1982		0.81	0.58
1983		0.55	0.58
1984		0.67	0.72
1985		0.63	0.57
1986		0.52	
1987		0.54	
1988		0.59	
1989		0.73	
1990		0.64	
1991		0.54	
1992		0.71	
1993		0.66	
1994		0.57	
1995		0.40	
1996		0.45	
1997		0.41	
1998		0.48	
1999		0.51	
2000		0.23	
2001		0.20	
2002		0.17	
2003		0.14	
2004		0.17	
2005		0.18	
2006		0.16	
2007		0.14	

**Table 5 The total rockfish CPUE data from the recreational bottomfish-specific fishery for the Puget Sound Proper (south Puget Sound). These data estimate rockfish per angler trip, calculated from the total catch in punch card areas 8-13 divided by the total trips in areas 8-13 (8-12 for Buckley (1967, 1968, 1970) and Bargmann (1977)). For 1971, regions 8 and 12 are missing from the data and for 1973, region 8 is missing.**

Year	Buckley and Bargmann	Palsson et al. (2008)
1965	0.68	
1966	1.29	
1967	0.28	
1968	0.83	
1969	1.03	
1970	1.63	
1971	0.62	
1972	0.78	
1973	1.18	
1974		
1975		
1976		
1977		1.01
1978		0.78
1979		0.75
1980		0.79
1981		0.71
1982		0.76
1983		0.41
1984		0.63
1985		0.55
1986		0.5
1987		0.5
1988		0.58
1989		0.66
1990		0.57
1991		0.47
1992		0.62
1993		0.45
1994		0.5
1995		0.27
1996		0.27
1997		0.3
1998		0.29
1999		0.27
2000		0.12
2001		0.16
2002		0.14
2003		0.11
2004		0.11
2005		0.09
2006		0.09
2007		0.09

**Table 6 The total rockfish CPUE data from the recreational bottomfish-specific fishery for the North Puget Sound. For Palsson et al. (2008) data are the total catch divided by the total trips in areas 5-7. For Buckley (1967, 1968, 1970) and Bargmann (1977), the data are total catch divided by total trips in punch card areas 6 and 7. 1971 and 1973 are based on data from punch card area 7 only.**

Year	Buckley and Bargmann	Palsson et al. (2008)
1965	0.89	
1966	1.42	
1967	0.34	
1968	0.67	
1969	3.38	
1970	0.99	
1971	1.22	
1972	1.65	
1973	1.12	
1974		
1975		
1976		
1977		1.75
1978		1.21
1979		1.51
1980		1.15
1981		1
1982		0.93
1983		0.82
1984		0.75
1985		0.79
1986		0.56
1987		0.62
1988		0.61
1989		0.87
1990		0.77
1991		0.69
1992		0.9
1993		1.07
1994		0.71
1995		0.67
1996		0.79
1997		0.64
1998		0.87
1999		0.99
2000		0.45
2001		0.28
2002		0.23
2003		0.22
2004		0.3
2005		0.32
2006		0.28
2007		0.21

**Table 7 The total rockfish CPUE from the commercial bottom trawl data for the whole Puget Sound, including Strait of Juan de Fuca. These data are estimates of pounds ( $\times 1000$ ) of rockfish per hour trawled in PMFC catch area 4A or Washington statistical area 18.**

Year	PMFC (1979)	Schmitt et al. (1991)	Holmberg et al. (1967)
1955			13.63
1956			11.22
1957			20.96
1958			14.76
1959			17.51
1960			14.67
1961			13.72
1962	3.97		19.57
1963	9.12		46.80
1964	5.37		21.27
1965	5.19		
1966	3.44		
1967	4.3		
1968	2.53		
1969	2.95		
1970	7.13	8.44	
1971	4.78	3.63	
1972	2.86	3.29	
1973	4.32	4.68	
1974	3.59	4.15	
1975	4.40	4.73	
1976	5.64	6.30	
1977	5.00	5.74	
1978	6.05	7.46	
1979	6.77	11.41	
1980		13.4	
1981		6.47	
1982		5.55	
1983		5.72	
1984		6.59	
1985		5.34	
1986		4.92	
1987		0.94	
1988		3.31	

**\*\*Not for Distribution\*\***

**\*\*Predecisional ESA Document\*\***

**Table 8 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Trawl survey sampling effort by region depth and year. HC=Hood Canal, SS=South Puget Sound, WI=Whidbey Basin, CS= Central Puget Sound, GB=US Strait of Georgia, GC=BC Strait of Georgia, JE=East US Juan de Fuca, CJ=East BC Juan de Fuca, SJ=US San Juan Archipelago, DB=Discovery Bay, WJ=West US Juan De Fuca, CA=BC Haro Strait and Boundary Pass. Depth is given in fathoms.**

<b>0-20 fm</b>	<b>CJ</b>	<b>CS</b>	<b>DB</b>	<b>GB</b>	<b>GC</b>	<b>HC</b>	<b>JE</b>	<b>JF</b>	<b>JW</b>	<b>SJ</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>WI</b>
1987		8		1		2		2			5	
1988												
1989		6		7		2		5			4	
1990												
1991		6		6		2		2			4	
1992												
1993												
1994				16								
1995		16										
1996						10					10	
1997				17	12							
1998												
1999												
2000	5		6				9					
2001				20						15		
2002		12				7					8	7
2003	6		4				9		6			
2004				15			7		5	8		
2005		10				8					14	12
2006				18						11		
2007			6				9		4			
2008		2		2		2	2		2	2	2	

<b>21-40 fm</b>	<b>CJ</b>	<b>CS</b>	<b>DB</b>	<b>GB</b>	<b>GC</b>	<b>HC</b>	<b>JE</b>	<b>JF</b>	<b>JW</b>	<b>SJ</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>WI</b>
1987		6		1				6			5	
1988												
1989		4		3		2		6			3	
1990												
1991		4		3		2		3			3	
1992												
1993												
1994				6								
1995		11										
1996						9					10	
1997				6	11							
1998												
1999												
2000	6		6				9					
2001				8						7		
2002		13				6					8	6
2003	7		10				10		6			
2004				9			9		5	8		
2005		10				9					13	9
2006				7						9		
2007			6				9		5			
2008		2		2		2	2		2	2	2	2

**\*\*Not for Distribution\*\***

**\*\*Predecisional ESA Document\*\***

41-60 fm	CJ	CS	DB	GB	GC	HC	JE	JF	JW	SJ	SS	WI
1987		5		2		3		9			2	
1988												
1989		4		2		2		7			2	
1990												
1991		4		2		2		6			2	
1992												
1993												
1994				4								
1995		9										
1996						3					8	
1997				6	10							
1998												
1999												
2000	7						11					
2001				7	3					6		
2002		10				6					6	6
2003	8			6			10		12			
2004							10		10	7		
2005		13				15					7	8
2006				6						9		
2007							12		10			
2008		4		4		4	4		4	4	4	2

61-120 fm	CJ	CS	DB	GB	GC	HC	JE	JF	JW	SJ	SS	WI
1987		9		7		2		13			5	
1988												
1989		5		5		2		9			3	
1990												
1991		6		5		3		3			3	
1992												
1993												
1994				9								
1995		3										
1996						3					11	
1997				11	25							
1998												
1999												
2000	7						11					
2001				15	11					12		
2002		14				7					5	7
2003	6						11		15			
2004				20			15		20	14		
2005		13				8					8	11
2006				19						15		
2007							15		22			
2008		6		4		4	4		4	4	4	2

>121 fm	CJ	CS	DB	GB	GC	HC	JE	JF	JW	SJ	SS	WI
1987												
1988												
1989												
1990												
1991												
1992												
1993												
1994												
1995												
1996												
1997												
1998												
1999												
2000												
2001												
2002												
2003												
2004												
2005												
2006												
2007												
2008												

**Table 9** The total rockfish CPUE from the WDFW trawl survey (Palsson et al., 2008) and the REEF dive surveys (REEF, 2008). The WDFW trawl survey is reported as an estimate of abundance in north and south Puget Sound (Puget Sound Proper). The estimate for south Puget Sound is an order of magnitude larger than the estimate for north Puget Sound, which is contrary to our assumptions about the relative abundances in these areas. Therefore, these estimates should be treated as relative abundance indices (like all the other data in this trend analysis). The REEF data are the average minimum abundance of rockfish, any species, recorded in dive locations throughout the south and north Puget Sound. Most of these dives occurred in south Puget Sound.

Year	WDFW Trawl Survey (south Puget Sound)	WDFW Trawl Survey (north Puget Sound)	REEF (2008) (south Puget Sound)	REEF (2008) (north Puget Sound)
1987	1265.2	89.9		
1988				
1989	1419.0	96.2		
1990				
1991	470.1	18.3		
1992				
1993				
1994				
1995				
1996	383.2			
1997				
1998			15.62	48.89
1999			9.91	24.00
2000			4.34	22.40
2001		34.70	6.99	8.48
2002	236.20		6.33	19.91
2003			7.78	14.63
2004		51.20	10.25	27.61
2005	249.60		7.58	12.35
2006			8.29	16.95
2007			10.74	16.74
2008			9.14	15.11

**Table 10 The species frequency data for bocaccio in Puget Sound Proper. Data from the recreational fishery and are calculated from dockside surveys in punch card areas 8-13. The 1980-2007 data are in Table 7.5 in Palsson et al. (2008). Reported sample sizes (fish identified) are given in parentheses if available.**

Year	WA Sport Catch Rpts	Palsson et al. (2008)	Buckley and Bargmann
1965			0 (NA)
1966			0.41 (NA)
1967			1.01 (NA)
1968			0 (NA)
1969			0 (NA)
1970			1.51 (NA)
1971			3.12 (NA)
1972			0 (NA)
1973			0 (NA)
1974			
1975	1.38 (NA)		
1976	2.5 (NA)		
1977	9.35 (NA)		
1978	8.03 (NA)		
1979	1.89 (NA)		
1980	1.11 (NA)	0.58 (1460)	
1981	0.37 (NA)	0 (1027)	
1982	1.15 (NA)	0.44 (965)	
1983	0.63 (NA)	0 (937)	
1984	0.01 (NA)	0 (985)	
1985	0 (NA)	0.41 (1292)	
1986	0.24 (NA)	0.3 (760)	
1987			
1988			
1989		0 (1004)	
1990			
1991			
1992			
1993			
1994			
1995			
1996		0 (185)	
1997		0 (85)	
1998		0 (133)	
1999		0 (74)	
2000		0 (47)	
2001		0 (26)	
2002		0 (85)	
2003		0 (367)	
2004		0 (322)	
2005		0 (335)	
2006		0 (296)	
2007		0 (283)	



**Table 11 The species frequency data for bocaccio in North Puget Sound. Data all from the recreational fishery and are calculated from dockside surveys in punch card areas 5-7. The 1980-2007 data are in Table 7.5 in Palsson et al. (2008). Reported sample sizes (fish identified) are given in parentheses if available.**

Year	WA Sport Catch Rpts	Palsson et al. (2008)	Buckley and Bargmann
1965			0 (NA)
1966			0 (NA)
1967			0 (NA)
1968			0 (NA)
1969			0 (NA)
1970			0 (NA)
1971			0 (NA)
1972			0 (NA)
1973			0 (NA)
1974			
1975	0 (NA)		
1976	0.06 (NA)		
1977	0.08 (NA)		
1978	0.11 (NA)		
1979	0.32 (NA)		
1980	1.01 (NA)	0.2 (1121)	
1981	0.29 (NA)	0 (434)	
1982	0 (NA)	0 (404)	
1983	0 (NA)	0 (321)	
1984	0.18 (NA)	0 (318)	
1985	0 (NA)	0 (360)	
1986	0.15 (NA)	0 (519)	
1987			
1988			
1989		0 (433)	
1990			
1991			
1992			
1993			
1994			
1995			
1996		0.2 (578)	
1997		0 (223)	
1998		0 (496)	
1999		0 (200)	
2000		0 (162)	
2001		0 (59)	
2002		0 (91)	
2003		0 (715)	
2004		0 (613)	
2005		0 (490)	
2006		0 (513)	
2007		0 (275)	

**Table 12** The species frequency data from the commercial catch data for bocaccio rockfish in Puget Sound Proper. The 1983-1984 data point is reported in Pedersen and Bargmann (1986); it is not clear from this document precisely when the species composition data were collected, however other species identification data are specified as being collected in 1984. This data point is later presented as 1970-1987 in Table 6.1 in Palsson et al. (2008), but the original identifications appear to have been done in a single year. The 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, and 1993 were from surveys of the commercial catches those years but no identifications have been done on the commercial catch since 1993 (according to Palsson et al. (2008)). Data from commercial gear with which Bocaccio rockfish are not caught are not shown. Blanks indicate missing years not zeros.

Year	Set Net	Set Line
1983-84	67.4	10.6
1984		
1985		
1986		
1987		
1988	69.8	0.0
1989	69.9	8.0
1990	70.7	0.0
1991	69.8	0.0
1992		
1993	70.5	7.0

**Table 13 The species frequency data for canary rockfish in Puget Sound Proper. These data all come from the recreational fishery and are calculated from dockside surveys in punch card areas 8-13. The 1980-2007 data are in Table 7.5 in Palsson et al. (2008). Since 2002, no catch of canary rockfish is allowed in the recreational fishery thus no frequency data are available. Reported sample sizes (fish identified) are given in parentheses if available.**

Year	WA Sport Catch Rpts	Palsson et al. (2008)	Buckley and Bargmann
1965			0.53 (NA)
1966			0.18 (NA)
1967			0.84 (NA)
1968			3.75 (NA)
1969			6.9 (NA)
1970			0.36 (NA)
1971			0 (NA)
1972			2 (NA)
1973			12.77 (NA)
1974			
1975	1.44 (NA)		
1976	2.06 (NA)		
1977	2.45 (NA)		
1978	1.17 (NA)		
1979	0.78 (NA)		
1980	1.25 (NA)	0.93 (1460)	
1981	0.84 (NA)	0.54 (1027)	
1982	1.23 (NA)	2.11 (965)	
1983	0.24 (NA)	0.66 (937)	
1984	0.52 (NA)	0.63 (985)	
1985	1.77 (NA)	2.16 (1292)	
1986	1.81 (NA)	1.11 (760)	
1987			
1988			
1989		0.7 (1004)	
1990			
1991			
1992			
1993			
1994			
1995			
1996		0 (185)	
1997		0 (85)	
1998		0 (133)	
1999		0 (74)	
2000		8.5 (47)	
2001		0 (26)	

**Table 14** The species frequency data for canary rockfish in North Puget Sound. These data all come from the recreational fishery and are calculated from dockside surveys in punch card areas 5-7. The 1980-2007 data are in Table 7.5 in Palsson et al. (2008). Since 2002, no catch of canary rockfish is allowed in the recreational fishery thus no frequency data are available. Reported sample sizes (fish identified) are given in parentheses if available.

Year	WA Sport Catch Rpts	Palsson et al. (2008)	Buckley and Bargmann
1965			0 (NA)
1966			12.42 (NA)
1967			1.6 (NA)
1968			10.29 (NA)
1969			7.73 (NA)
1970			0 (NA)
1971			0 (NA)
1972			13.21 (NA)
1973			51.9 (NA)
1974			
1975	6.94 (NA)		
1976	5.23 (NA)		
1977	5.41 (NA)		
1978	3 (NA)		
1979	1.17 (NA)		
1980	2.05 (NA)	1.5 (1121)	
1981	1.43 (NA)	1.8 (434)	
1982	1.27 (NA)	1.71 (404)	
1983	1.61 (NA)	2.21 (321)	
1984	1.54 (NA)	1.3 (318)	
1985	1.88 (NA)	1.9 (360)	
1986	1.87 (NA)	1 (519)	
1987			
1988			
1989		0 (433)	
1990			
1991			
1992			
1993			
1994			
1995			
1996		0.3 (578)	
1997		0.4 (223)	
1998		0.6 (496)	
1999		1 (200)	
2000		1.2 (162)	
2001		0 (59)	

**Table 15** The species frequency data from the commercial catch data for canary rockfish in north Puget Sound. The 1970-1987 data point is from accumulated data over this period. Reference is Palsson et al. (2008, Table 6.1). Data from gear with which canary rockfish are not caught are not shown.

Year	Bottom trawl	Set Line
1983-84	0	0
1984		
1985		
1986		
1987		
1988	0.2	6.0
1989	0.7	3.5
1990	0.0	1.6
1991	2.7	1.2
1992		
1993	0.4	7.4

**Table 16 The species frequency data for yelloweye rockfish in Puget Sound Proper. The recreational fishery data are calculated from dockside surveys in punch card areas 8-13. The 1980-2007 data are in Palsson et al. (2008, Table 7.5). Since 2002, no catch of yelloweye rockfish is allowed in the recreational fishery thus no frequency data are available. Note that redstripe rockfish have been removed from the original data when calculating species frequencies. Reported sample sizes (fish identified) are given in parentheses if available.**

Year	WA Sport Catch Rpts	Palsson et al. (2008)	WDFW Trawl Survey	Buckley and Bargmann
1965				0.99 (NA)
1966				0.88 (NA)
1967				0 (NA)
1968				0.44 (NA)
1969				2.43 (NA)
1970				0 (NA)
1971				1.32 (NA)
1972				18.6 (NA)
1973				2.14 (NA)
1974				
1975	0.59 (NA)			
1976	0.71 (NA)			
1977	0.84 (NA)			
1978	0.66 (NA)			
1979	0 (NA)			
1980	1.44 (NA)	0.47 (1460)		
1981	0.29 (NA)	0.86 (1027)		
1982	0.62 (NA)	0.44 (965)		
1983	0.66 (NA)	0.11 (937)		
1984	0.43 (NA)	0 (985)		
1985	0.86 (NA)	0.31 (1292)		
1986	1.32 (NA)	0.1 (760)		
1987			0 (NA)	
1988				
1989		0.3 (1004)	0 (NA)	
1990				
1991			0 (NA)	
1992				
1993				
1994				
1995				
1996		5.92 (185)	2.22 (NA)	
1997		1.2 (85)		
1998		2.3 (133)		
1999		0 (74)		
2000		0 (47)		
2001		0 (26)		
2002		NA (85)	0 (NA)	
2003		NA (367)		
2004		NA (322)		

**\*\*Not for Distribution\*\***

**\*\*Predecisional ESA Document\*\***

2005

NA (335)

0.2 (NA)

---

**Table 17 The species frequency data for yelloweye rockfish in north Puget Sound in the recreational fishery. Species composition was calculated from dockside surveys in punch card areas 5-7. The 1980-2007 data are in Palsson et al. (2008, Table 7.5). Since 2002, no catch of yelloweye rockfish is allowed in the recreational fishery thus no frequency data are available. Note that redstripe rockfish have been removed from the original data when calculating species frequencies.**

Year	WA Sport Catch Rpts	Palsson et al. (2008)	WDFW Trawl Survey	Buckley and Bargmann
1965				0.41 (NA)
1966				1.33 (NA)
1967				0 (NA)
1968				1.51 (NA)
1969				0.44 (NA)
1970				17.12 (NA)
1971				0 (NA)
1972				5.17 (NA)
1973				2.41 (NA)
1974				
1975	1.87 (NA)			
1976	2.44 (NA)			
1977	1.63 (NA)			
1978	3.72 (NA)			
1979	0 (NA)			
1980	5.53 (NA)	1.5 (1121)		
1981	0.94 (NA)	1.6 (434)		
1982	5.14 (NA)	1.71 (404)		
1983	2.73 (NA)	4.02 (321)		
1984	1.61 (NA)	1.6 (318)		
1985	2.73 (NA)	2.5 (360)		
1986	2.26 (NA)	0.8 (519)		
1987			0 (NA)	
1988				
1989		3 (433)	0 (NA)	
1990				
1991			0 (NA)	
1992				
1993				
1994				
1995				
1996		0.9 (578)		
1997		0.4 (223)		
1998		0 (496)		
1999		1.5 (200)		
2000		0 (162)		
2001		3.4 (59)	0 (NA)	
2002		NA (91)		
2003		NA (715)		
2004		NA (613)	1.37 (NA)	



**Table 18 The species frequency data from the commercial catch data for yelloweye rockfish in north Puget Sound. The 1970-1987 data point is from accumulated data over this period. Reference is Palsson et al. (2008, Table 6.1). Data from gear with which yelloweye rockfish are not caught are not shown.**

Year	Bottom trawl	Jig	Bottomfish Troll	Other Troll	Set Line	Set Net
1983-84	1.1	36.6	47.4	49.7	28.0	2.2
1984						
1985						
1986						
1987						
1988	0.8	28.1	43.4	50.0	49.8	3.2
1989	0.0	39.3	55.6	47.8	72.5	1.9
1990	0.0	39.0		49.3	83.4	
1991	0.3	29.2		50.1	91.9	
1992						
1993	0.0	31.6	50.0	53.1	48.8	2.9

**Table 19** The percent of dives in which yelloweye rockfish were sighted (at any abundance) from the REEF recreational scuba dive surveys for all dive sites in Puget Sound. The number of dives are given in parentheses.

Year	South Puget Sound	North Puget Sound
1998	1.05 (95)	0 (27)
1999	0 (95)	0 (8)
2000	0 (93)	0 (15)
2001	0.53 (379)	0 (33)
2002	0.27 (376)	0 (74)
2003	0.71 (421)	0 (51)
2004	1.07 (469)	3.03 (66)
2005	0.47 (428)	0 (54)
2006	0.49 (608)	2.56 (156)
2007	0.6 (826)	2.44 (164)
2008	0 (383)	1.89 (53)

**Table 20 The species frequency data for greenstriped rockfish in Puget Sound Proper. These data all come from the recreational fishery and are calculated from dockside surveys in punch card areas 8-13. The 1980-2007 data are in Palsson et al. (2008, Table 7.5).**

Year	WA Sport Catch Rpts	Palsson et al. (2008)	WDFW Trawl Survey	Buckley and Bargmann
1965				0 (NA)
1966				0.35 (NA)
1967				0.18 (NA)
1968				0 (NA)
1969				8.78 (NA)
1970				0 (NA)
1971				0 (NA)
1972				0 (NA)
1973				0 (NA)
1974				
1975	2.13 (NA)			
1976	2.37 (NA)			
1977	0.73 (NA)			
1978	1.53 (NA)			
1979	2.49 (NA)			
1980	0.96 (NA)	0.82 (1460)		
1981	0.14 (NA)	0.54 (1027)		
1982	1.15 (NA)	0.89 (965)		
1983	0.15 (NA)	2.3 (937)		
1984	0.25 (NA)	0.21 (985)		
1985	0 (NA)	0.21 (1292)		
1986	0 (NA)	0 (760)		
1987			0 (NA)	
1988				
1989		0.4 (1004)	0 (NA)	
1990				
1991			0.09 (NA)	
1992				
1993				
1994				
1995				
1996		0.5 (185)	0.31 (NA)	
1997		0 (85)		
1998		1.5 (133)		
1999		0 (74)		
2000		0 (47)		
2001		0 (26)		
2002		0 (85)	0.68 (NA)	
2003		0.3 (367)		
2004		0 (322)		
2005		0 (335)	0.52 (NA)	
2006		0 (296)		
2007		0 (283)		

**Table 21 The species frequency data for greenstriped rockfish in north Puget Sound. These data all come from the recreational fishery and are calculated from dockside surveys in punch card areas 5-7. The 1980-2007 data are in Palsson et al. (2008, Table 7.5).**

Year	WA Sport Catch Rpts	Palsson et al. (2008)	WDFW Trawl Survey	Buckley and Bargmann
1965				0 (NA)
1966				0 (NA)
1967				0 (NA)
1968				3 (NA)
1969				0 (NA)
1970				0 (NA)
1971				0 (NA)
1972				0 (NA)
1973				0 (NA)
1974				
1975	0 (NA)			
1976	0 (NA)			
1977	0 (NA)			
1978	0 (NA)			
1979	0.05 (NA)			
1980	0.07 (NA)	0 (1121)		
1981	0 (NA)	0 (434)		
1982	0 (NA)	0 (404)		
1983	0 (NA)	0 (321)		
1984	0 (NA)	0 (318)		
1985	0 (NA)	0 (360)		
1986	0 (NA)	0 (519)		
1987			0 (NA)	
1988				
1989		0 (433)	0 (NA)	
1990				
1991			0 (NA)	
1992				
1993				
1994				
1995				
1996		0 (578)		
1997		0 (223)		
1998		0 (496)		
1999		0 (200)		
2000		0 (162)		
2001		0 (59)	0 (NA)	
2002		0 (91)		
2003		0 (715)		
2004		0 (613)	0.78 (NA)	
2005		0 (490)		
2006		0 (513)		
2007		0.4 (275)		

**Table 22 The species frequency data for redstripe rockfish in Puget Sound Proper. These data all come from the recreational fishery and are calculated from dockside surveys in punch card areas 8-13. The 1980-2007 data are in Palsson et al. (2008, Table 7.5).**

Year	WA Sport Catch Rpts	Palsson et al. (2008)	WDFW Trawl Survey	Buckley and Bargmann
1965				0 (NA)
1966				0 (NA)
1967				0 (NA)
1968				1.05 (NA)
1969				1.03 (NA)
1970				0.24 (NA)
1971				0 (NA)
1972				0 (NA)
1973				0 (NA)
1974				
1975	0.43 (NA)			
1976	0.01 (NA)			
1977	0.29 (NA)			
1978	0.02 (NA)			
1979	0.65 (NA)			
1980	4.44 (NA)	14.2 (1460)		
1981	0.75 (NA)	7.5 (1027)		
1982	4.19 (NA)	9.8 (965)		
1983	9.53 (NA)	8.1 (937)		
1984	0.25 (NA)	4.2 (985)		
1985	0.16 (NA)	3 (1292)		
1986	0 (NA)	0.8 (760)		
1987			0.06 (NA)	
1988				
1989		0.6 (1004)	0.06 (NA)	
1990				
1991			1.43 (NA)	
1992				
1993				
1994				
1995				
1996		0 (185)	1.39 (NA)	
1997		0 (85)		
1998		0 (133)		
1999		0 (74)		
2000		0 (47)		
2001		0 (26)		
2002		0 (85)	39.11 (NA)	
2003		0 (367)		
2004		0 (322)		
2005		0 (335)	48.37 (NA)	
2006		0 (296)		
2007		0 (283)		

**Table 23 The species frequency data for redstripe rockfish in north Puget Sound. These data all come from the recreational fishery and are calculated from dockside surveys in punch card areas 5-7. The 1980-2007 data are in Palsson et al. (2008, Table 7.5).**

Year	WA Sport Catch Rpts	Palsson et al. (2008)	WDFW Trawl Survey	Buckley and Bargmann
1965				0 (NA)
1966				0 (NA)
1967				0 (NA)
1968				0.46 (NA)
1969				0 (NA)
1970				0 (NA)
1971				0 (NA)
1972				0 (NA)
1973				0 (NA)
1974				
1975	0 (NA)			
1976	0 (NA)			
1977	0 (NA)			
1978	0 (NA)			
1979	0 (NA)			
1980	0.07 (NA)	0.1 (1121)		
1981	0 (NA)	0 (434)		
1982	0.43 (NA)	0 (404)		
1983	0.27 (NA)	0 (321)		
1984	0.09 (NA)	0 (318)		
1985	0 (NA)	0 (360)		
1986	0 (NA)	0.4 (519)		
1987			3.64 (NA)	
1988				
1989		0 (433)	0.41 (NA)	
1990				
1991			6.63 (NA)	
1992				
1993				
1994				
1995				
1996		0 (578)		
1997		0 (223)		
1998		0 (496)		
1999		0 (200)		
2000		0 (162)		
2001		0 (59)	3.61 (NA)	
2002		0 (91)		
2003		0 (715)		
2004		0 (613)	52.59 (NA)	
2005		0.2 (490)		
2006		0 (513)		
2007		0 (275)		

**Table 24** Template for the risk matrix used in BRT deliberations. The matrix is divided into five sections that correspond to the four VSP "parameters" (McElhany et al. 2000) plus a "recent events" category.

<b>Risk Category</b>	<b>Score*</b>
<u>Abundance</u> <sup>1</sup> Comments:	
<u>Growth Rate/Productivity</u> <sup>1</sup> Comments:	
<u>Spatial Structure and Connectivity</u> <sup>1</sup> Comments:	
<u>Diversity</u> <sup>1</sup> Comments:	
<u>Recent Events</u> <sup>2</sup>	

<sup>1</sup> Rate overall risk to the DPS on 5-point scale (1–very low risk; 2–low risk; 3–moderate risk; 4–high risk; 5–very high risk).

<sup>2</sup> Rate recent events from double plus (++) strong benefit to double minus (--) strong detriment.

**\*\*Not for Distribution\*\***



**\*\*Predecisional ESA Document\*\***

**Table 25** Sample worksheet used by BRT in scoring the severity of current threats to the 5 rockfish DPSs. Threats are arranged within the four statutory listing factors: 1) the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range; 2) overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes; 3) disease or predation; and 4) other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

Species	Nearshore habitat loss	Dissolved Oxygen	Chemical contamination	Nutrients	Commercial harvest	Recreational harvest	Disease	Predation	Competition	Derelict Fishing Gear	Non-indigenous species	Climate	Hatchery Practices
Bocaccio													
Yelloweye													
Canary													
Redstripe													
Greenstriped													
ESA listing factor	Habitat modification				Overutilization		Disease or predation		Other				



**Table 26 Description of reference levels for the Biological Review Team’s assessment of the species’ or Distinct Population Segment’s (DPS) extinction risk.**

<b>Qualitative “Reference Levels” of Relative Extinction Risk</b>	
 Continuum of decreasing relative risk of extinction  	<p>(1) <u>Moderate Risk</u>: a species or DPS is at moderate risk of extinction if it exhibits a trajectory indicating that it is more likely than not to be at a high level of extinction risk (see description of “High Risk” below). A species/DPS may be at moderate risk of extinction due to projected threats and/or declining trends in abundance, productivity, spatial structure or diversity. The appropriate time horizon for evaluating whether a species or DPS is more likely than not to be at high risk depends on various case- and species-specific factors. For example, the time horizon may reflect certain life-history characteristics (e.g., long generation time or late age-at-maturity) and may also reflect the timeframe or rate over which identified threats are likely to impact the biological status of the species or DPS (e.g., the rate of disease spread). The appropriate time horizon is not limited to the period that status can be quantitatively modeled or predicted within predetermined limits of statistical confidence. Please explain the time scale over which the BRT has confidence in evaluating moderate risk.</p>
	<p>(2) <u>High Risk</u>: a species or DPS with a high risk of extinction is at or near a level of abundance, productivity, spatial structure, and/or diversity that place its persistence in question. The demographics of a species/DPS at such a high level of risk may be highly uncertain and strongly influenced by stochastic and/or compensatory processes. Similarly, a species/DPS may be at high risk of extinction if it faces clear and present threats (e.g., confinement to a small geographic area; imminent destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat; or disease epidemic) that are likely to create such imminent demographic risks.</p>
EXTINCT	<p>A species or DPS is extinct when there is no longer a living representative.</p>

**\*\*Not for Distribution\*\***

**\*\*Predecisional ESA Document\*\***

**Table 27 Example worksheet used for the evaluation of the overall level of extinction risk for the various Puget Sound rockfish DPS using the “likelihood point” method (FEMAT 1993)**

### **Overall Extinction Risk Category <sup>1</sup>**

**Not at risk**

**Moderate Risk**

**High Risk**

**Number of  
likelihood  
points<sup>2</sup>**

***Comments:***

<sup>1</sup> These evaluations do not consider protective efforts, and therefore are not recommendations regarding Endangered Species Act listing status.

<sup>2</sup> Each Biological Review Team member distributes ten likelihood points among the three overall extinction risk categories. Placement of all ten points in a given risk category reflect 100% certainty that level of risk reflects the true level of extinction risk for the species. Distributing points between risk categories reflects uncertainty in whether a given category reflects the true species status.

**Table 28 Results of qualitative ranking by the Puget Sound rockfish BRT of severity of threats for 5 DPSs of Puget Sound rockfish. Median (with standard deviation) is shown for each threat type. Threats were scored as: 1 – very low, 2 – low, 3 – moderate, 4 – high, and 5 – very high. Members not voting mark severity of threat as “unknown”.**

Threat type	Habitat Modification				Fisheries			
	Nearshore	DO	Contaminant	Nutrients	Comm.	Rec.	Disease	
<b>Bocaccio</b>	Median	3	4	3.5	3	4	5	unknown
	SD	0.707107	1.30247	0.744024	1	0.64087	0.755929	
<b>Yelloweye</b>	Median	3	3	3	3	4	4	unknown
	SD	0.755929	1.246423	1.035098	1	1.30247	0.517549	
<b>Canary</b>	Median	3	4	3.5	3	4	4	unknown
	SD	0.707107	1.30247	0.744024	1	1.06066	0.517549	
<b>Redstripe</b>	Median	2	3.5	3	3	2.5	2.5	unknown
	SD	0.834523	1.28174	1.125992	1	1.164965	1.164965	
<b>Greenstriped</b>	Median	2	3	3	3	2.5	2.5	unknown
	SD	1.139626	1.296538	1.307323	1.069045	1.51174	1.899376	

Threat type	Other						
	Predation	Competition	Derelict Gear	Invasives	Climate	Hatchery	
<b>Bocaccio</b>	Median	3	3	2.5	3.5	3.5	4
	SD	0.894427	1.414214	1.21106	0.957427	1.264911	0.408248
<b>Yelloweye</b>	Median	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	4	4
	SD	0.752773	1.47196	0.816497	0.957427	1.032796	0.408248
<b>Canary</b>	Median	1.5	3	2.5	3.5	2	2
	SD	0.816497	1.414214	1.21106	0.957427	1.032796	1.032796
<b>Redstripe</b>	Median	1.5	3	2.5	3.5	2	2.5
	SD	0.816497	1.414214	1.21106	0.957427	1.169045	1.048809
<b>Greenstriped</b>	Median	1.5	3	2.5	3.5	2	2
	SD	0.979759	0.921485	0.969312	1.359062	1.194626	1.540314

**Table 29** Historically used common names of the five petitioned rockfish species.

Scientific name	Common name	Other Common names
<i>Sebastes pinniger</i>	canary rockfish	Orange rockfish
<i>Sebastes ruberrimus</i>	yelloweye rockfish	Red rockfish Red snapper Rasphead rockfish
<i>Sebastes elongatus</i>	greenstriped rockfish	Olive banded rock cod
<i>Sebastes paucispinis</i>	Bocaccio	Rock salmon
<i>Sebastes proriger</i>	redstripe rockfish	

\*\*Not for Distribution\*\*

\*\*Predecisional ESA Document\*\*

**Table 30 Average landings by the Puget Sound trawl fishery from 1955-1964 (data from Holmberg et al. 1967)**

Species group	Puget Sound – Ave. Annual Landings (lb)	Years of data	Price/lb	Comments
Petrale sole			\$0.10	Not abundant in PS
English sole	2,000,000	1945-64		
Dover sole	<50,000	1951-64	\$0.065	Catches down by 1964
Rock sole				Not abundant in PS
Starry flounder	350,000	1944-64		
Pacific cod	>3,000,000	1955-64		
Lingcod (trawl)	>75,000	1955-64		*225,000 lb/yr by troll
Sablefish				Not abundant in PS
Rockfish	<100,000	1955-64	\$0.05	
Pacific Ocean perch				Not abundant in PS
Small sole, walleye pollack, skate, hake			\$0.03	Mink food

## FIGURES

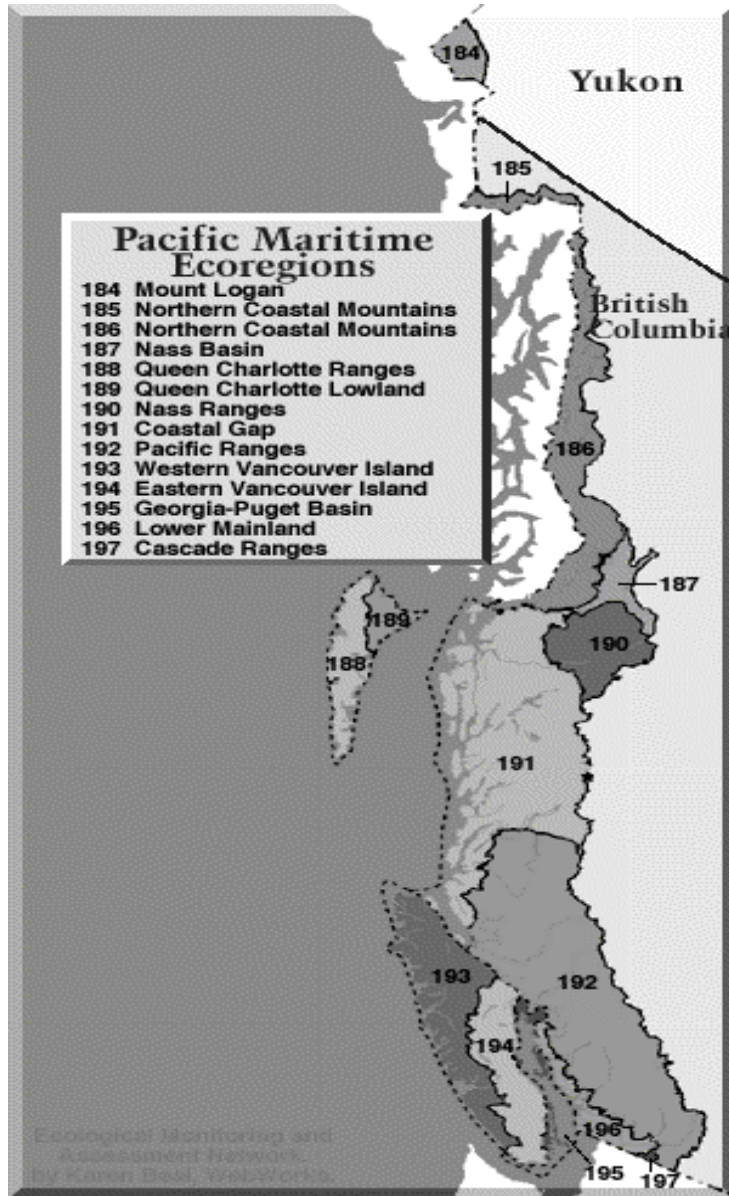
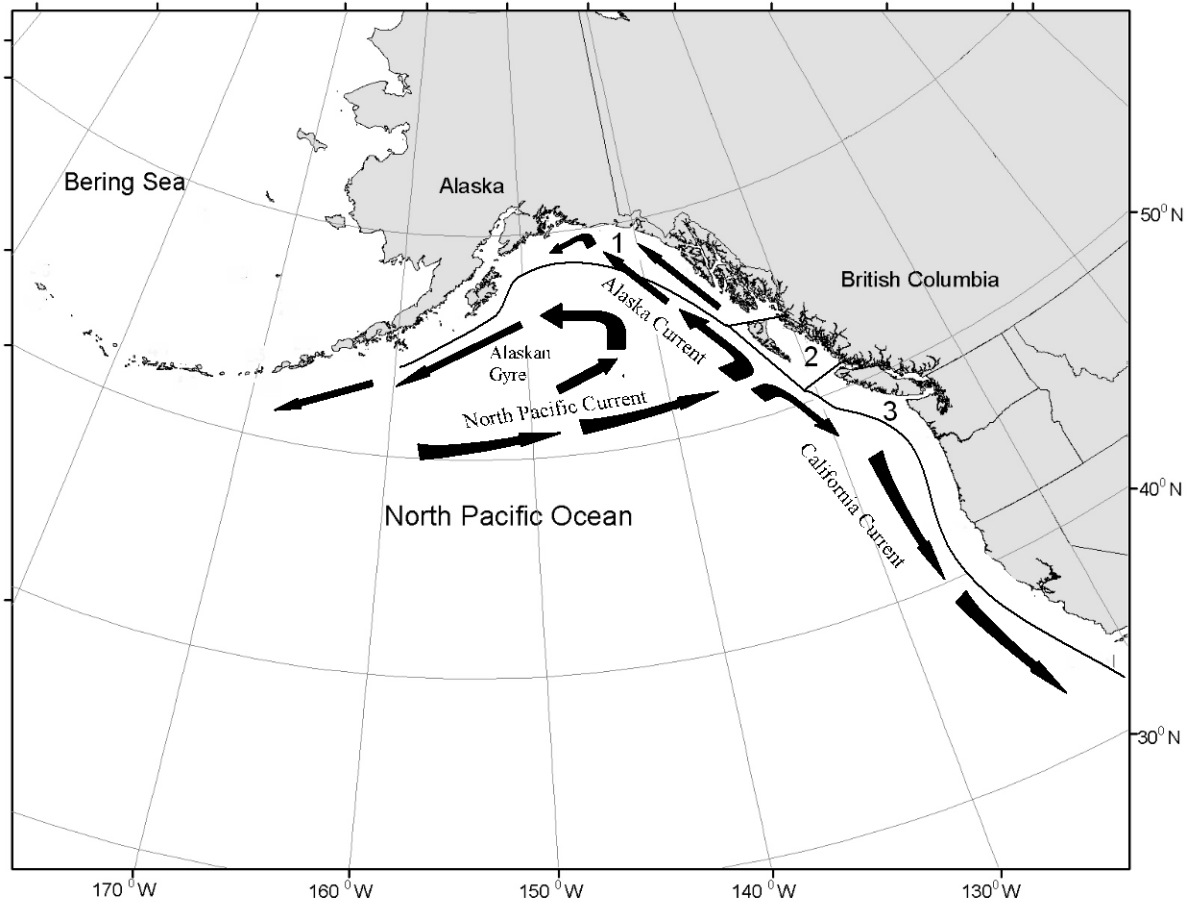
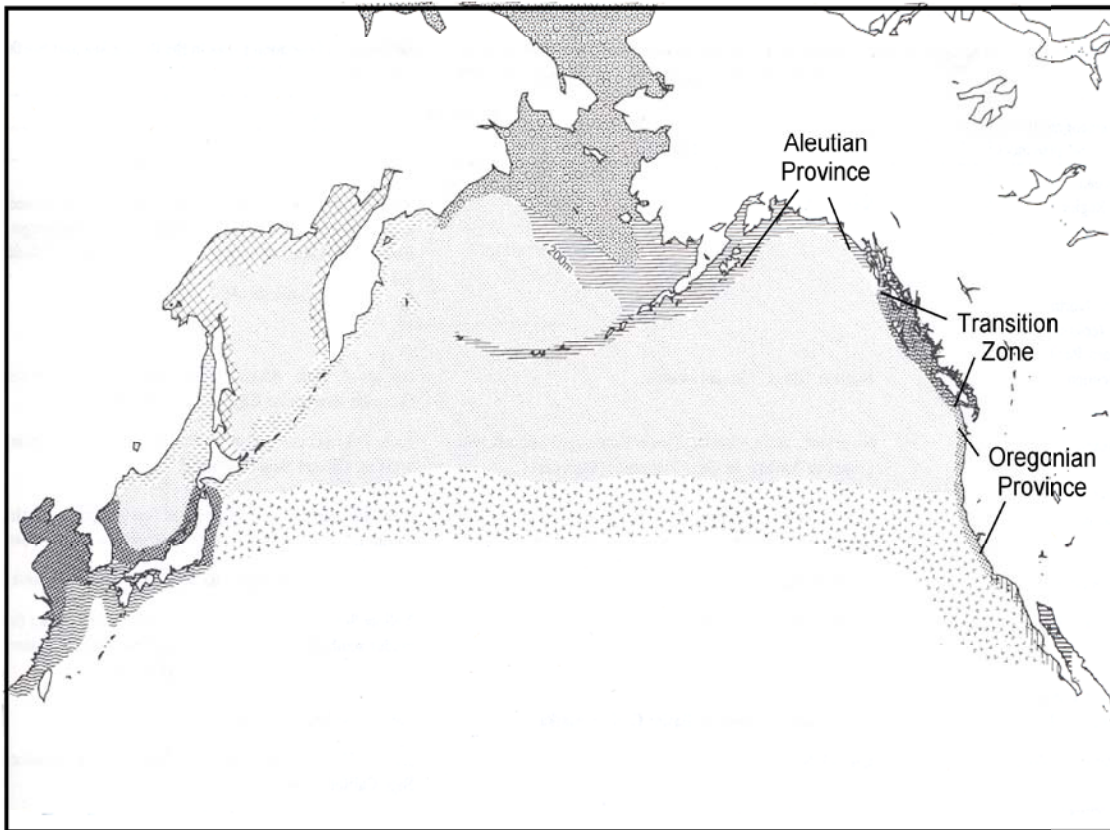


Figure 1 Ecoregions in the Pacific Maritime Ecozone of British Columbia. (Map retrieved from online source: [http://www.ec.gc.ca/soer-ree/English/Framework/NarDesc/pacmar\\_e.cfm](http://www.ec.gc.ca/soer-ree/English/Framework/NarDesc/pacmar_e.cfm))



**Figure 2** Approximate locations of oceanographic currents, Oceanic Domains (Ware and McFarlane 1989), and Coastal Provinces (Longhurst 2006), in the Northeast Pacific. 1 - Alaska Coastal Downwelling Province, 2 - Transition Zone, and 3 - California Current Province. (From Stout et al. (2001))



**Figure 3 Marine zoogeographic provinces of the North Pacific Ocean. (Modified after Allen and Smith (1988) in Stout et al. (2001)).**



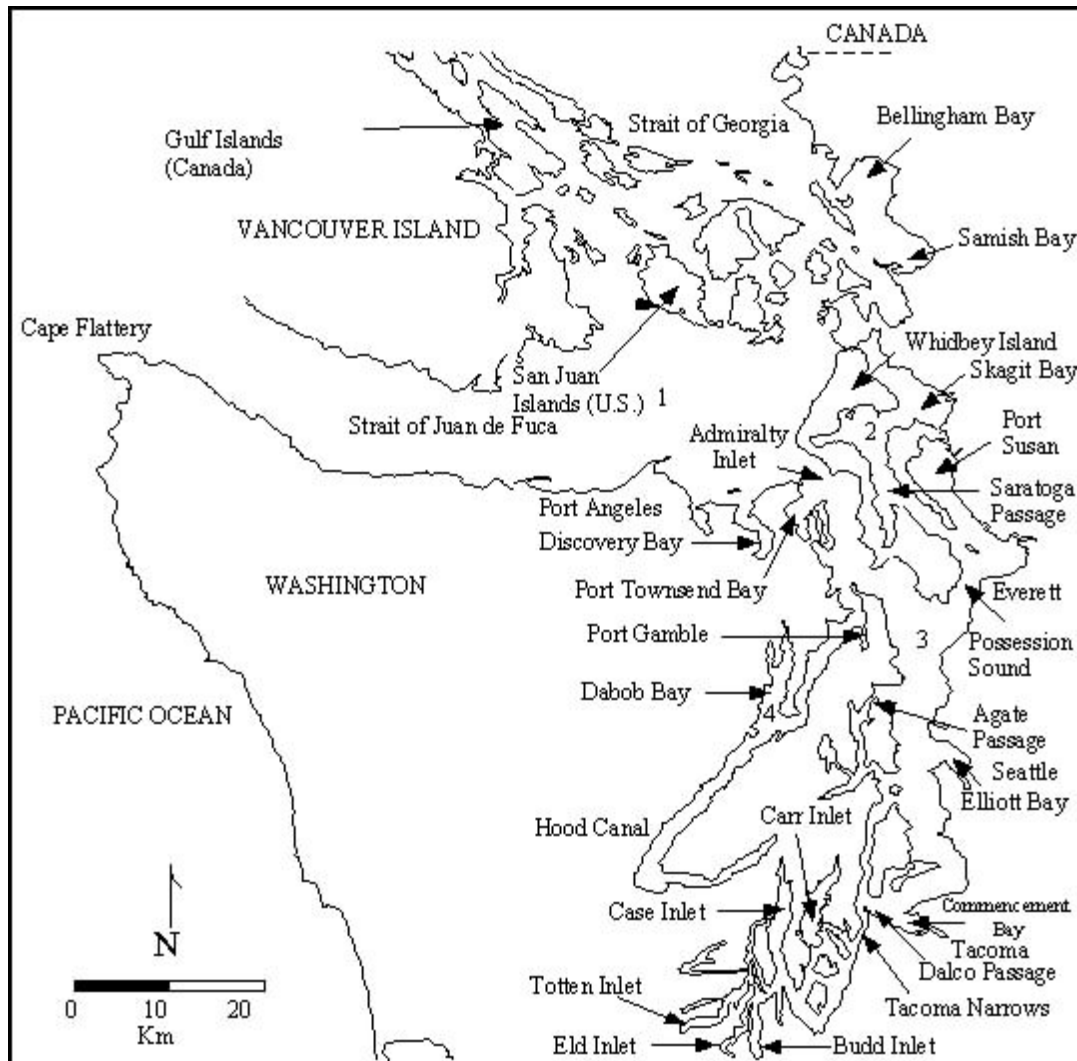


Figure 4 Regional water masses and sub areas of greater Puget Sound: 1. Northern Puget Sound 2. Whidbey Basin 3. Main Basin 4. Hood Canal and 5. Southern Puget Sound (From Stout et al. 2001).

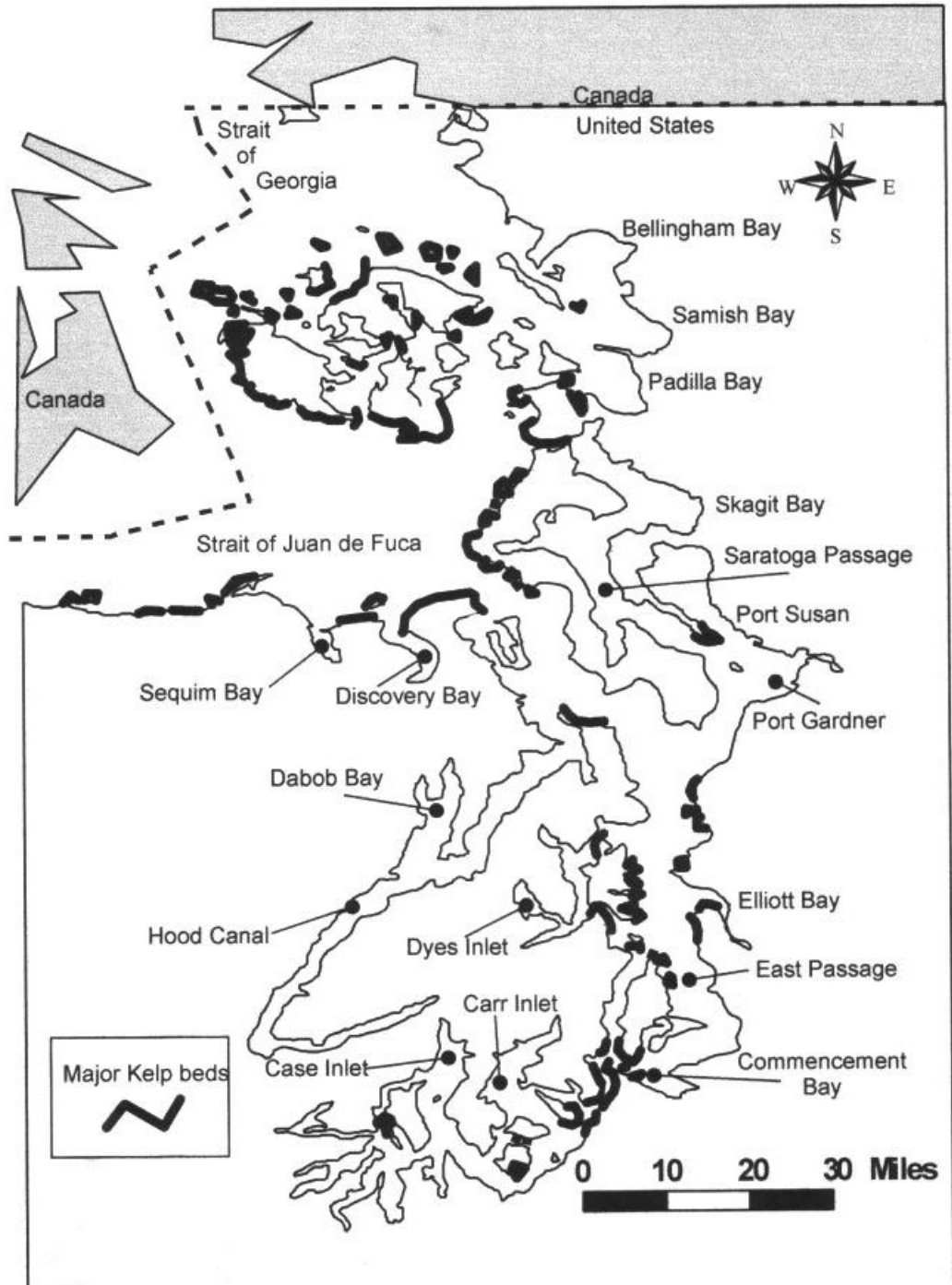


Figure 5 Location of major kelp beds in Puget Sound (PSWQA (1987) in Stout et al. (2001)).

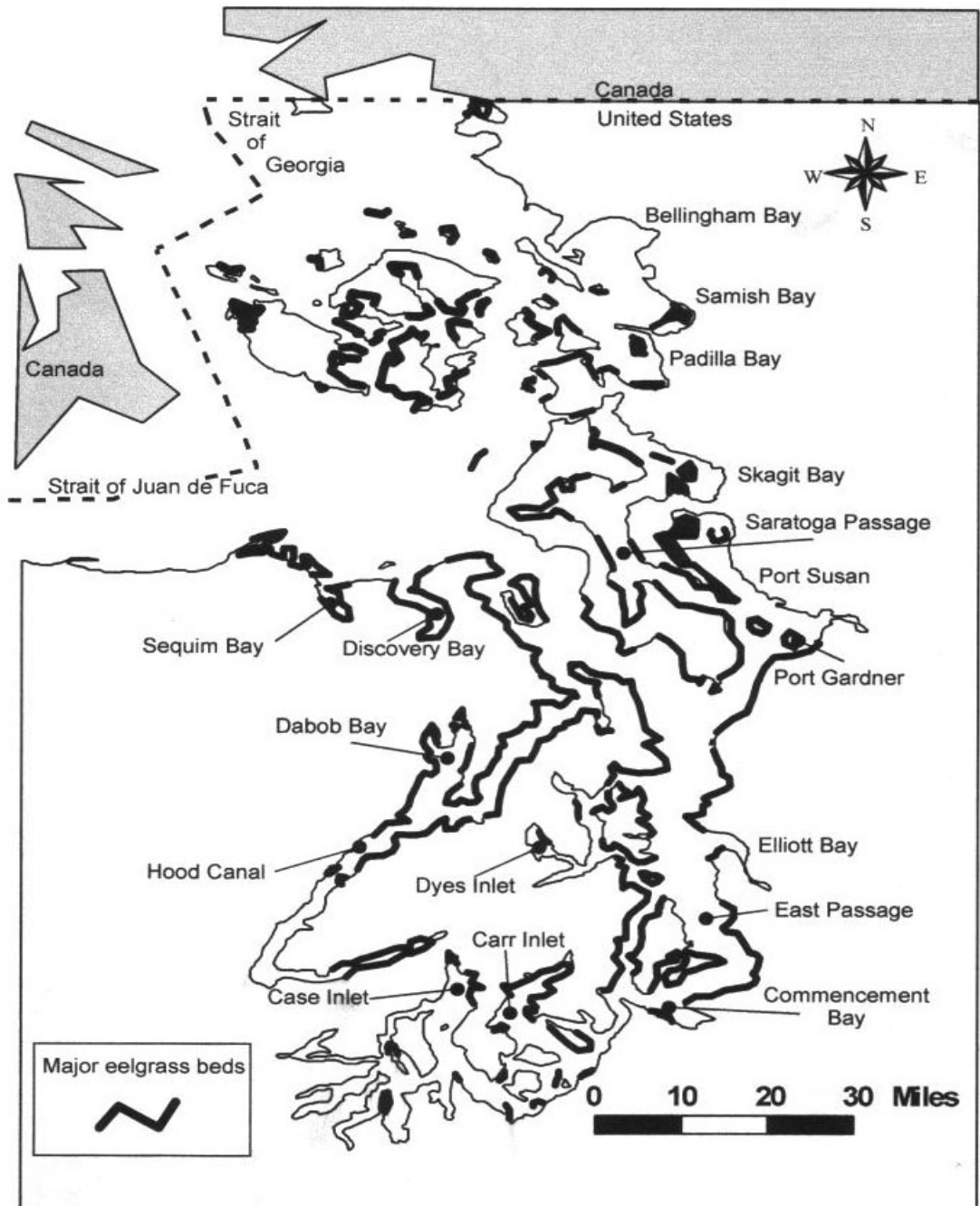


Figure 6 Locations of major eel grass beds in Puget Sound (PSWQA (1987) in Stout et al. (2001)).

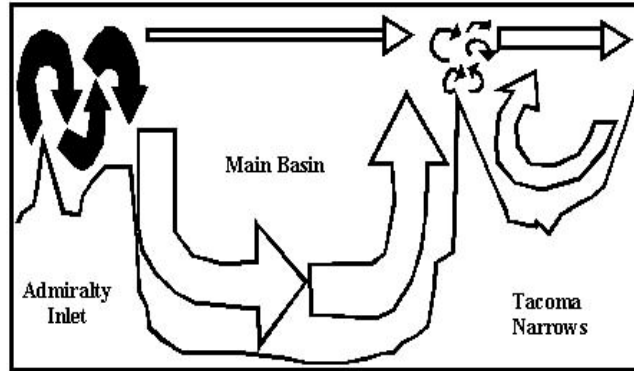


Figure 9A. Schematic of Puget Sound proper circulation during flood tide. Gray arrows represent strong vertical mixing. Light arrows represent horizontal currents. Modified after Strickland (1983).

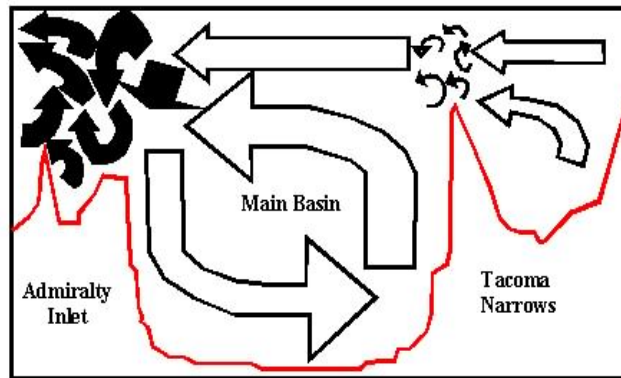


Figure 7 Schematic of circulation in Puget Sound proper during ebb tide (lower diagram) and flood tide (upper diagram). (Modified after Strickland (1983) in Stout et al. (2001)).

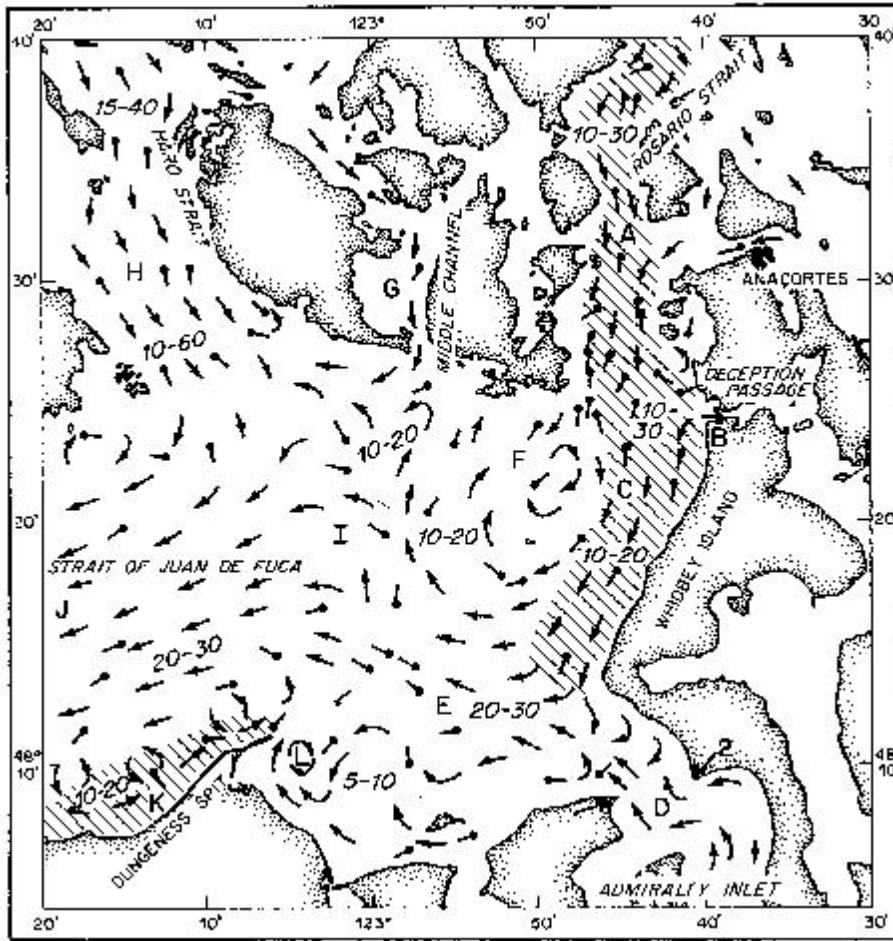


Figure 8 Plan view of net circulation in upper layer (30m) of the eastern end of the Strait of Juan de Fuca in North Puget Sound (Ebbesmeyer et al. (1984) in Stout et al. (2001)).

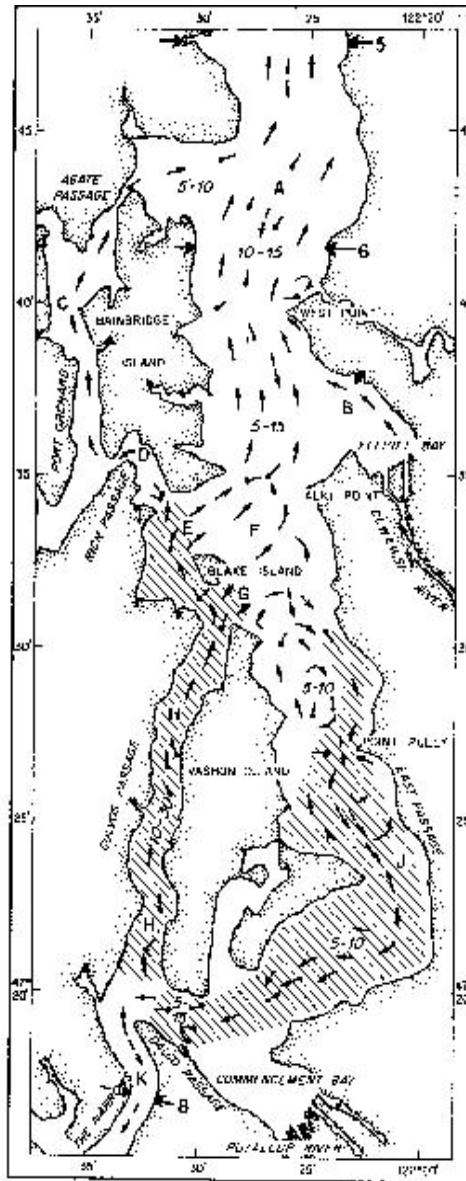


Figure 9 Plan view of the net circulation in upper layer (30m) of the Main Basin of Puget Sound Proper (Ebbesmeyer et al. (1984) in Stout et al. (2001)).

\*\*Not for Distribution\*\*

\*\*Predecisional ESA Document\*\*

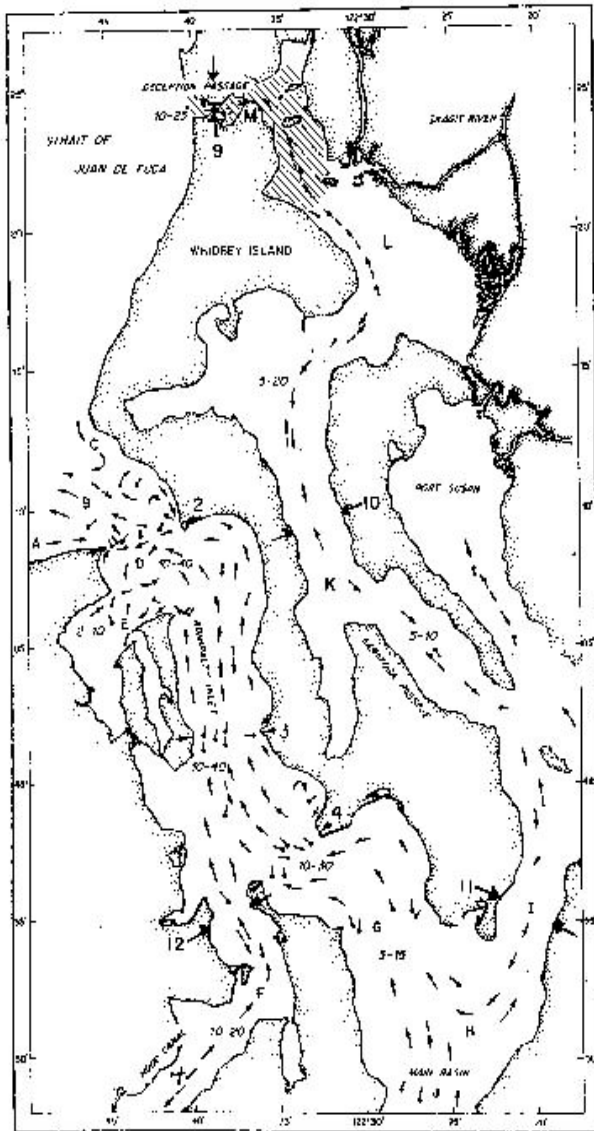


Figure 10 Plan view of net circulation in upper layer (30m) of Admiralty Inlet and Whidbey Basin in Puget Sound Proper (Ebbesmeyer et al (1984) in Stout et al. (2001)).



**Figure 11 Geographic locations in the Strait of Georgia and southern B.C. considered in this manuscript (From Stout et al. 2001).**



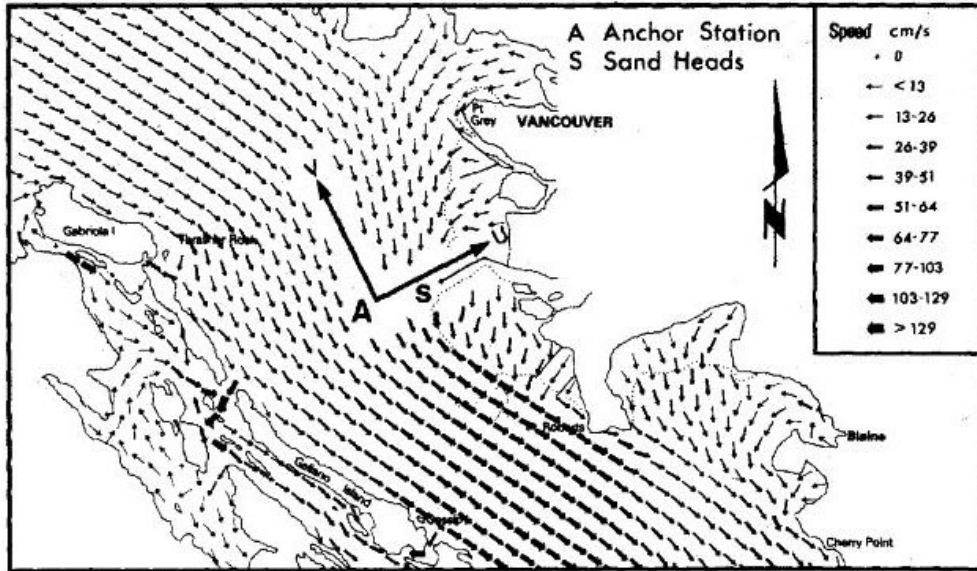
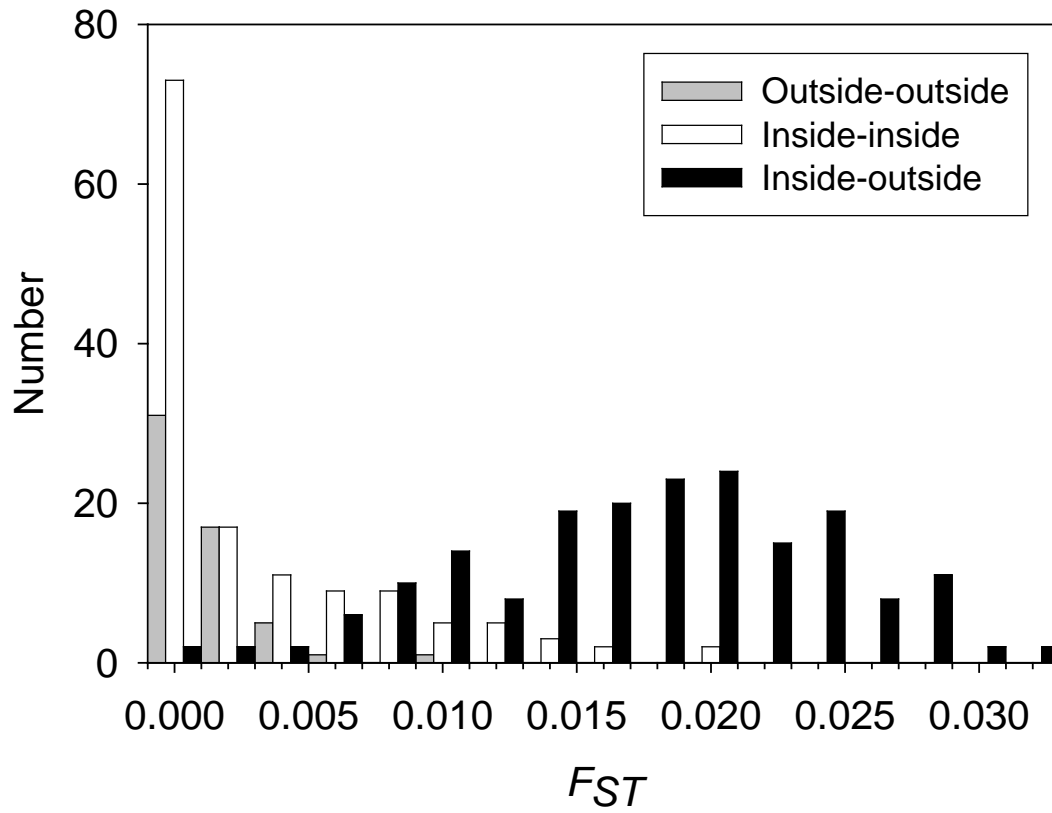
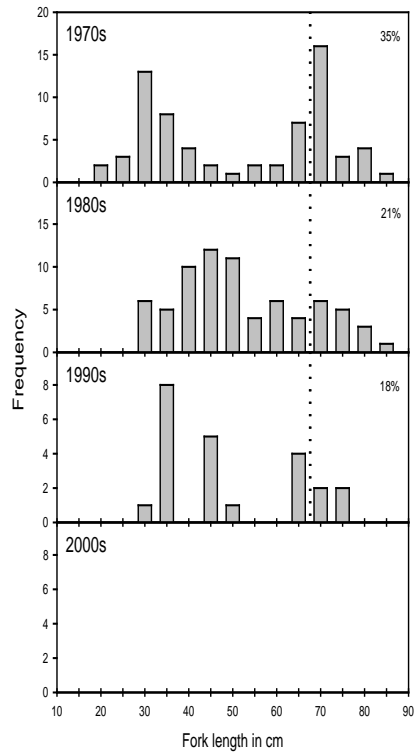


Figure 12 – Representative ebb velocity vectors in the general vicinity of the Fraser River mouth in the Strait of Georgia (Crean et al. (1988) in Stout et al. (2001)).

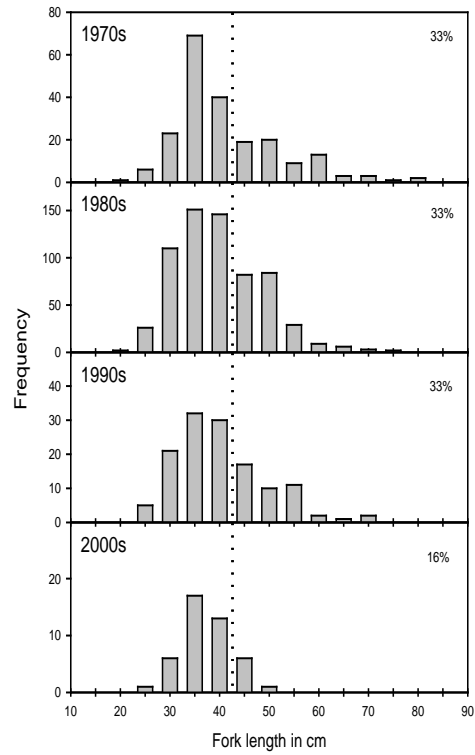


**Figure 13** Distribution of pair wise  $F_{ST}$  values for 28 samples of yelloweye rockfish collected from coastal populations ('outside') or the Strait of Georgia and Queen Charlotte Strait ('inside'). Based on Yamanaka et al. (2006) and unpublished data (R. Withler, pers. Comm.).

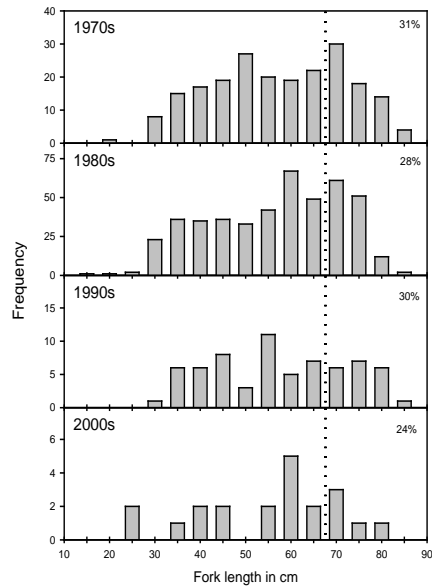
### Bocaccio



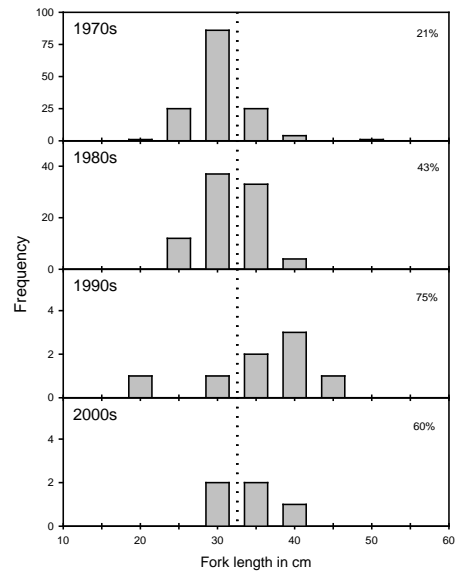
### Canary

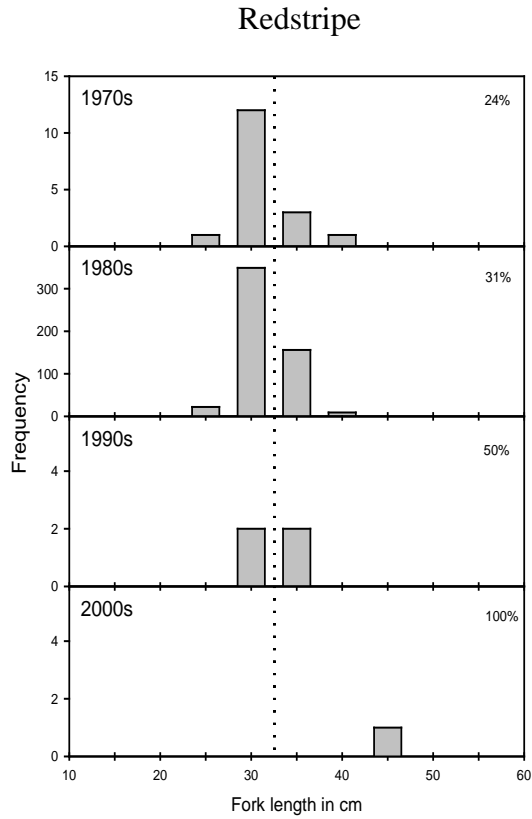


### Yelloweye

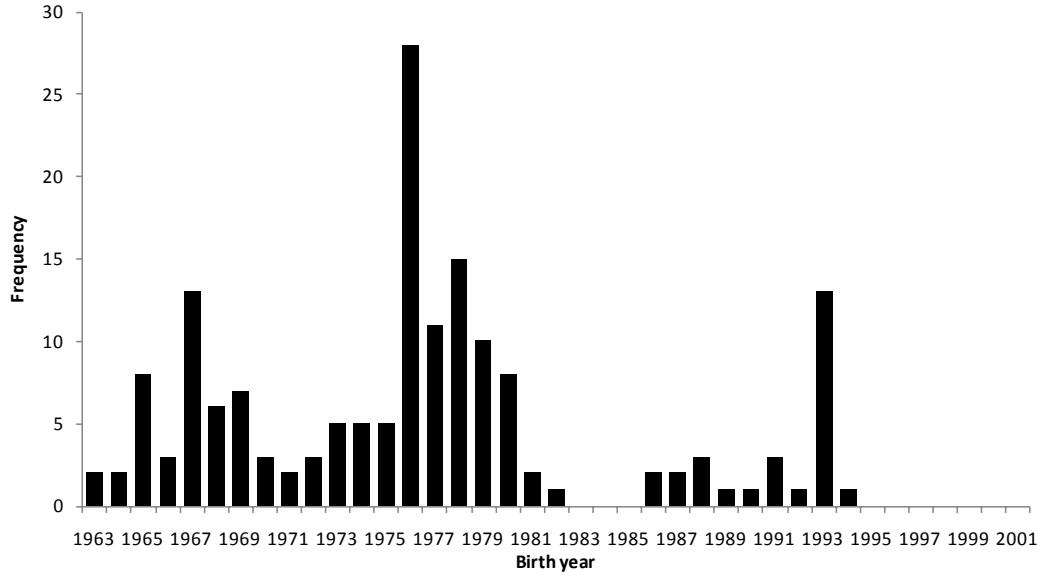


### Greenstriped

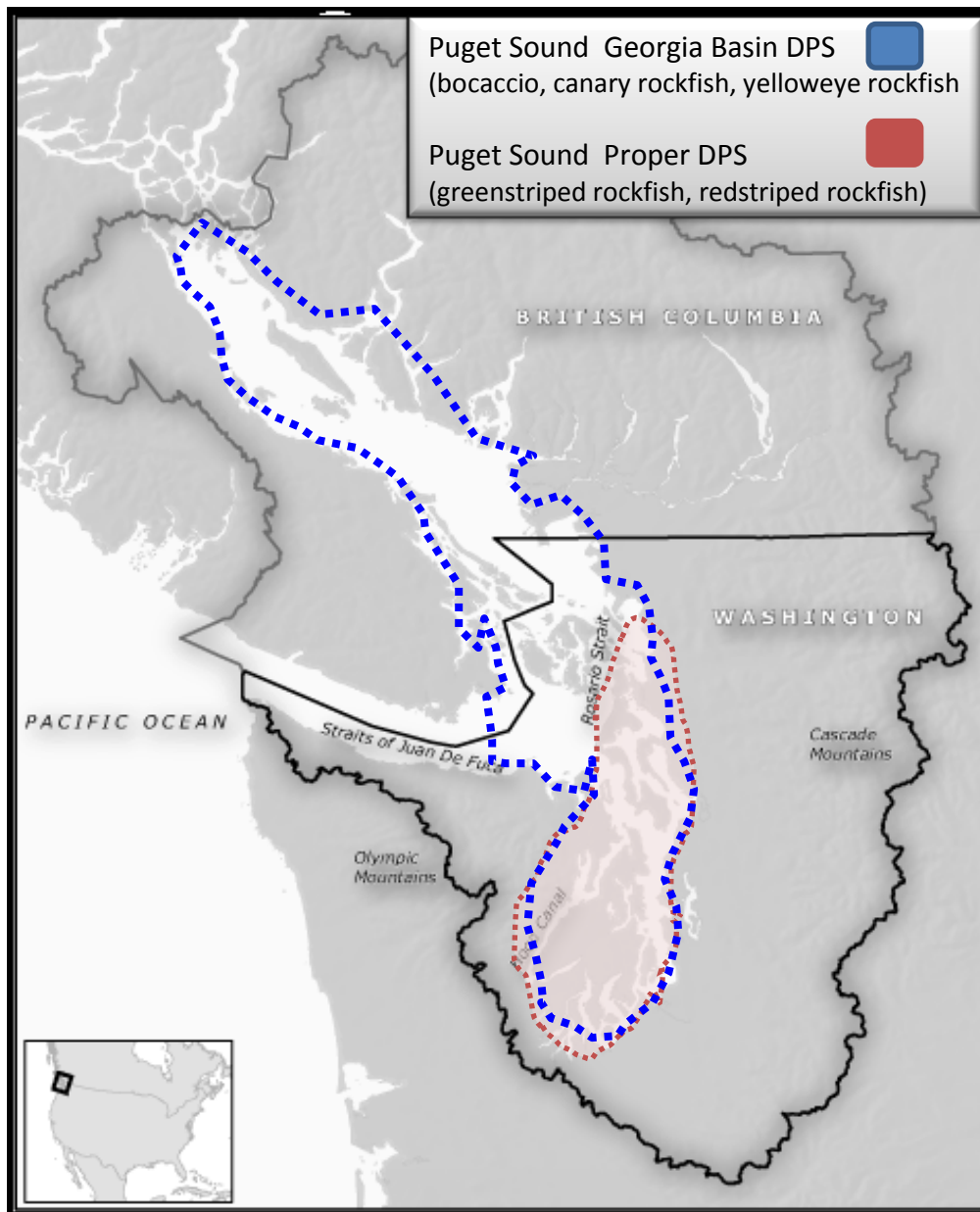




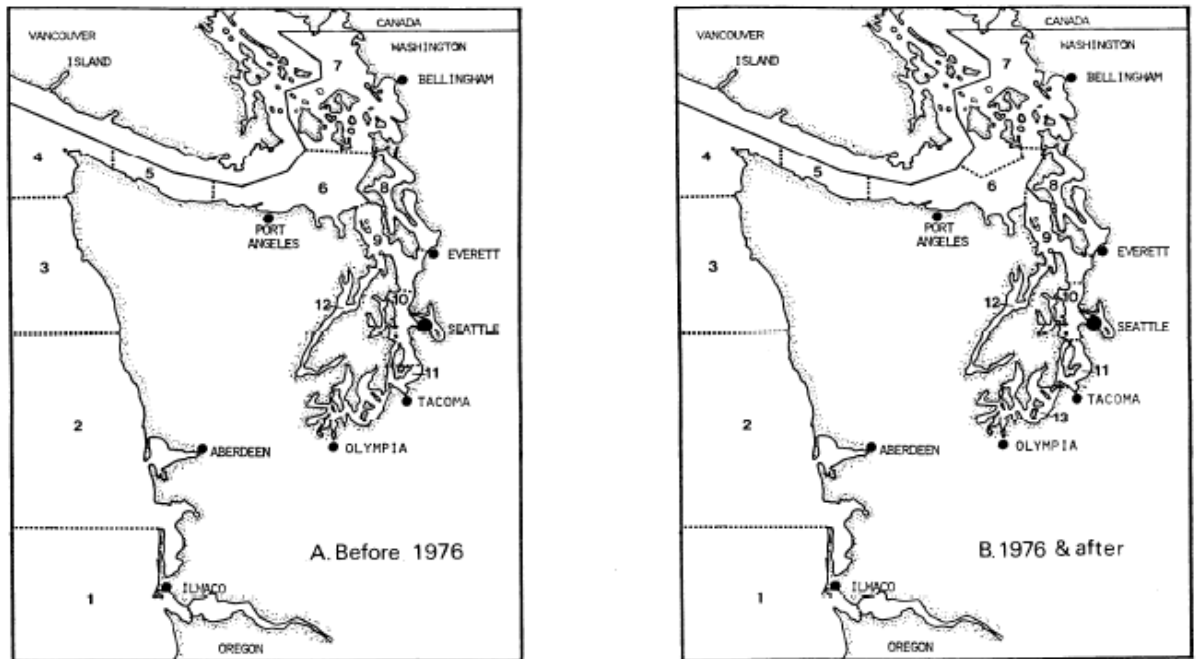
**Figure 14 Length frequency distributions of the 5 petitioned species over time. Sizes binned in 5cm classes and within decades. All data are from recreational fisheries records of WDFW. Vertical lines depict the size at which about 30% of the population was comprised of fish larger than the rest of the population in the 1970s, providing a reference point for comparison with later decades. Note that the scale for the frequencies varies among decades.**



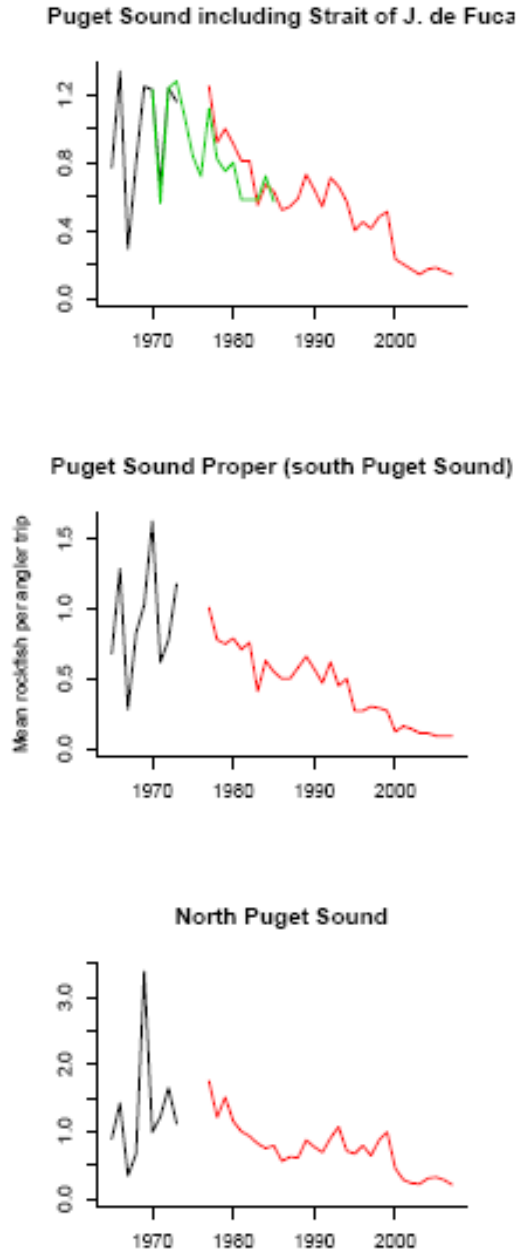
**Figure 15 – Frequency distribution of Puget Sound bocaccio birth years derived from the length frequency information shown in Figure 14.**



**Figure 16. Map depicting the approximate DPS boundaries for the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound and Puget Sound Proper DPSs. Figure is for purposes of illustration only and should not be used to identify precise boundaries.**



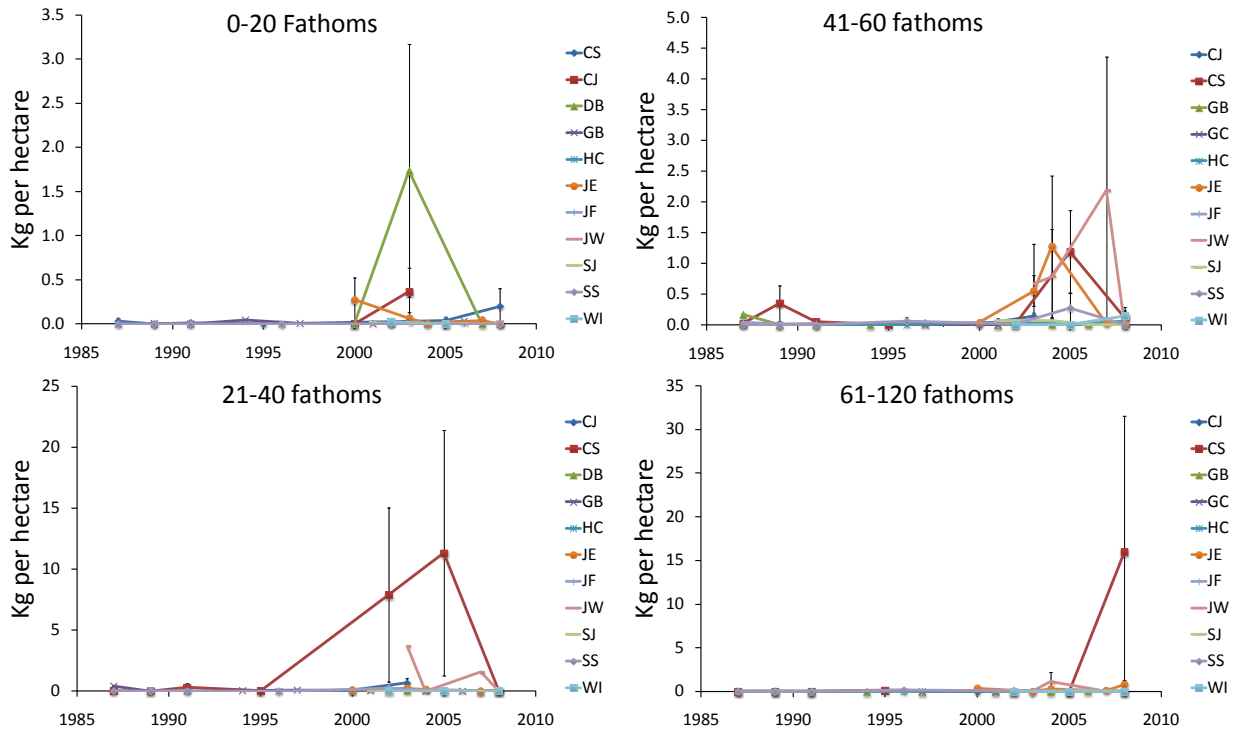
**Figure 17** Punch card areas for WDFW recreational data. Puget Sound Proper (Areas 8-13) and North Puget Sound (Areas 5-7) are used in this analysis (From Palsson (1988)).



**Figure 18 Rockfish per angler trip for bottomfish specific recreational fishery. Black line refers to data from Buckley and Bargmann. Green refers to Palsson (1988). Red refers to Palsson (2008).**



Greenstriped rockfish



Redstripe rockfish

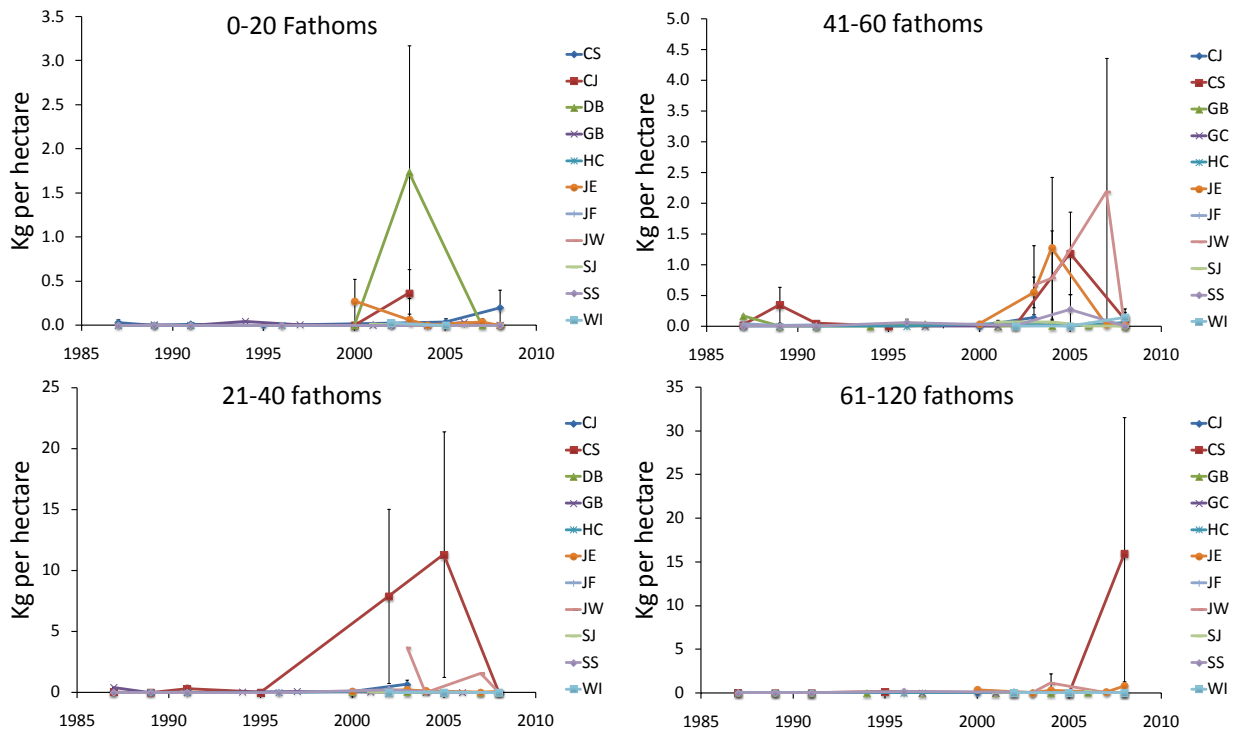
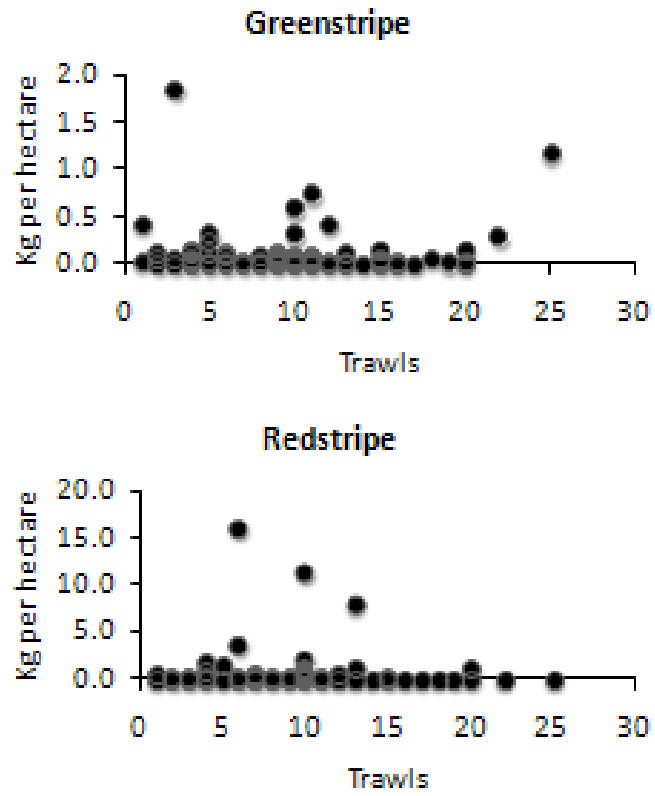


Figure 19 Greenstriped rockfish (upper graph) and redstripe rockfish (lower graph) hauls by depth zone in kilograms per hectare.



**Figure 20** Hauls (kg/hectare) as a function of the number of WDFW trawls for greenstriped rockfish (upper graph) and redstripe rockfish (lower graph)

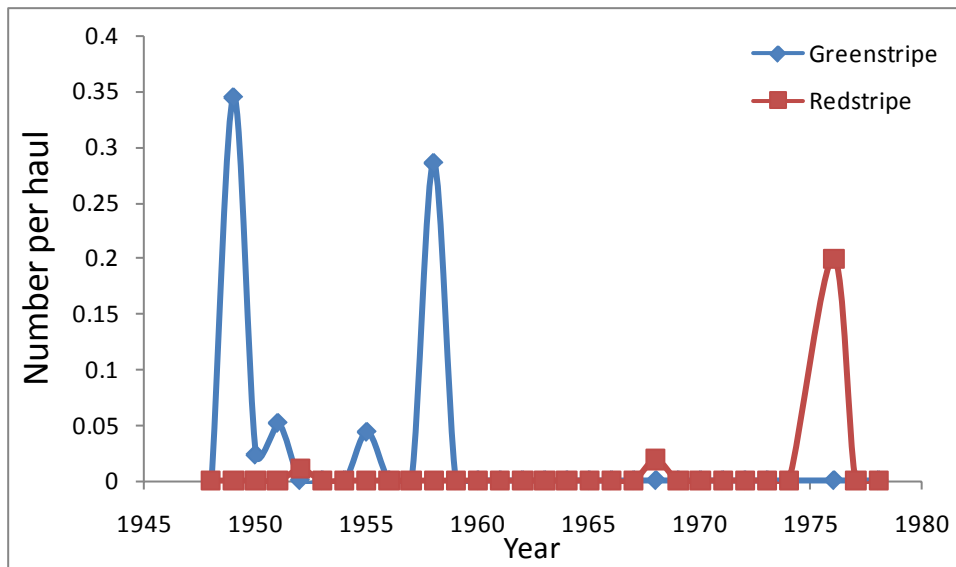
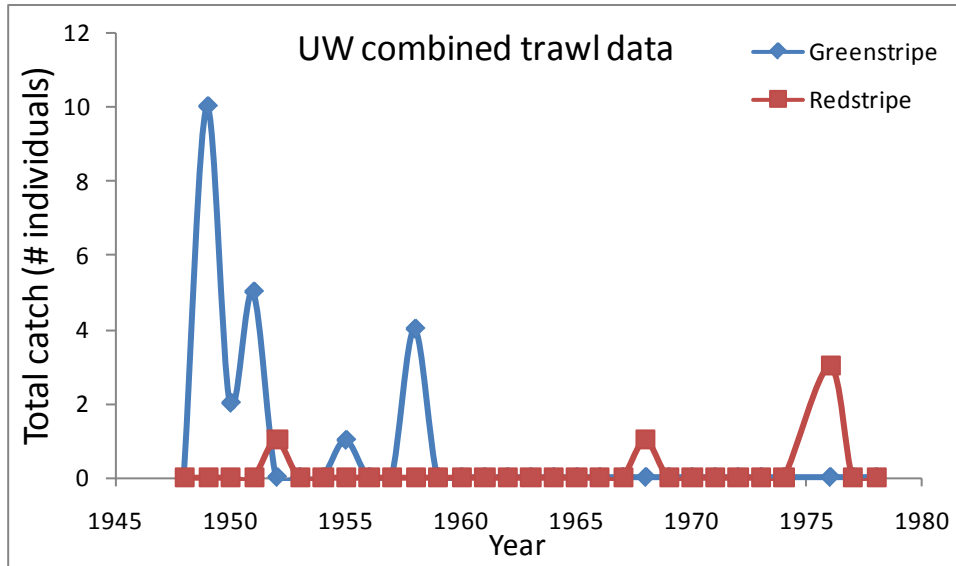
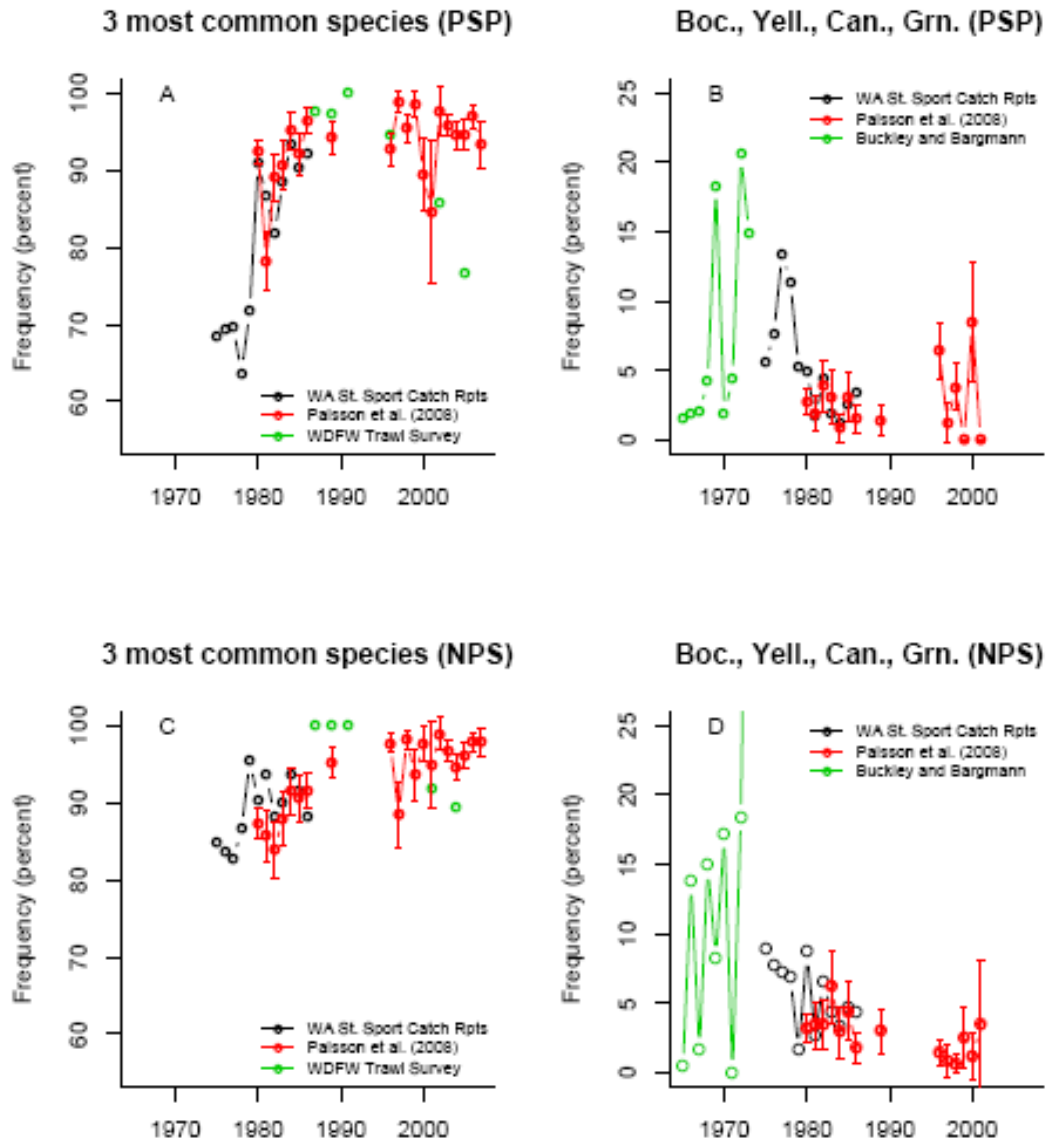
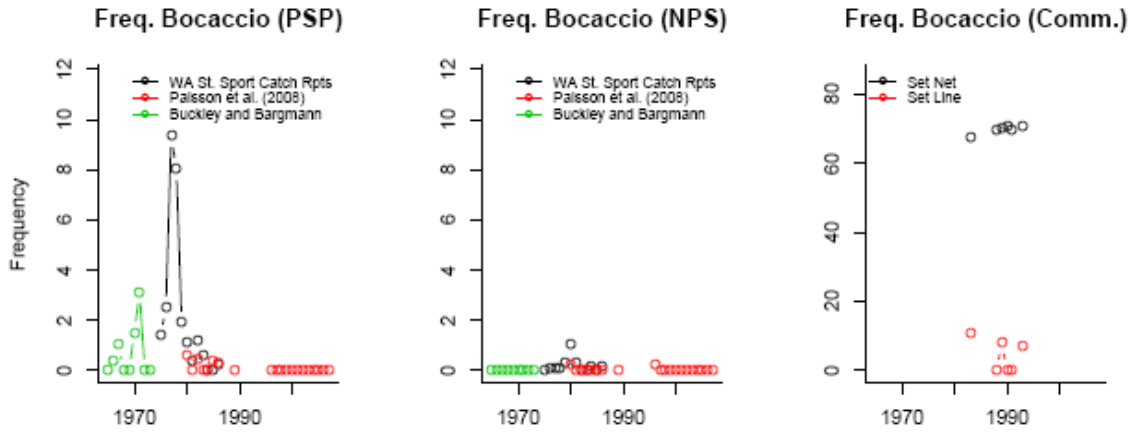


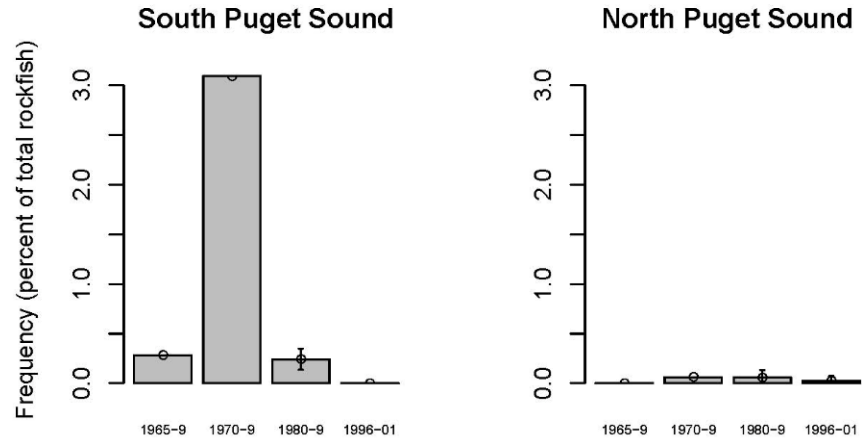
Figure 21 Total catch (# of individual fish) from University of Washington combined trawl data over time.



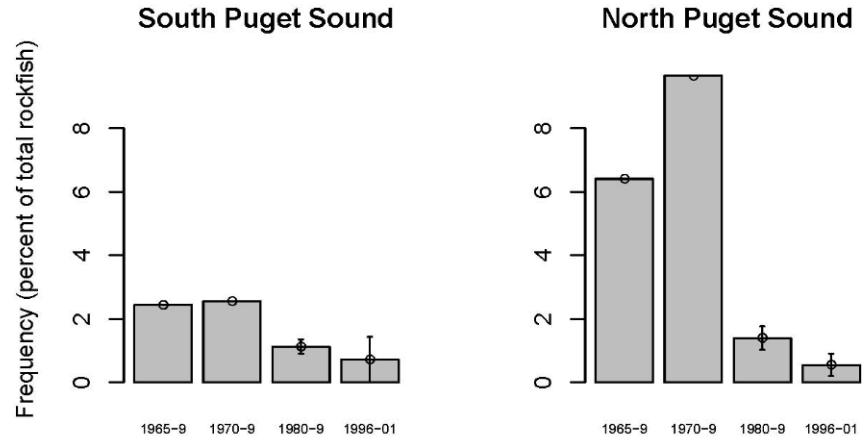
**Figure 22 Species frequency data from recreational bottomfish fisheries in Puget Sound Proper and North Puget Sound. See text for details on the data sources. Approximate 95% confidence intervals were calculated for the frequencies reported in Palsson et al. (2008) using the normal approximation  $\hat{p} \pm z\alpha/2 \sqrt{\hat{p}(1 - \hat{p})/n}$  and sample sizes,  $n$  provided by Palsson08. Redstripe rockfish has been removed from the datasets when calculated changes in frequencies because of concerns that discarding and highly aggregation led to large biases in the recreational and WDFS trawl data, respectively.**



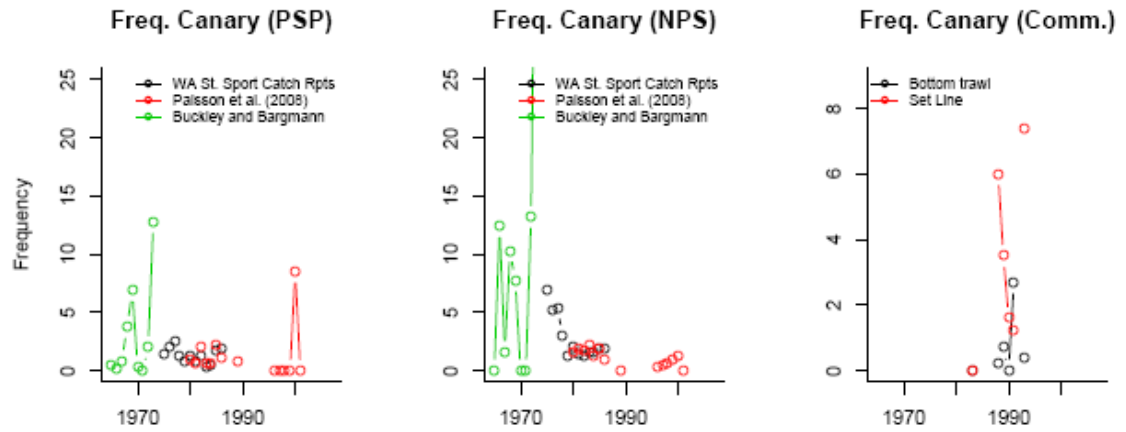
**Figure 23** Frequency estimates (% total catch) for Bocaccio in the recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper (PSP) and north Puget Sound (NPS), and commercial catch in Puget Sound Proper (Comm). Bocaccio do not appear in commercial catch records in NPS.



**Figure 24 Frequency (% total catch) for Bocaccio in recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper and north Puget Sound averaged across decades.**

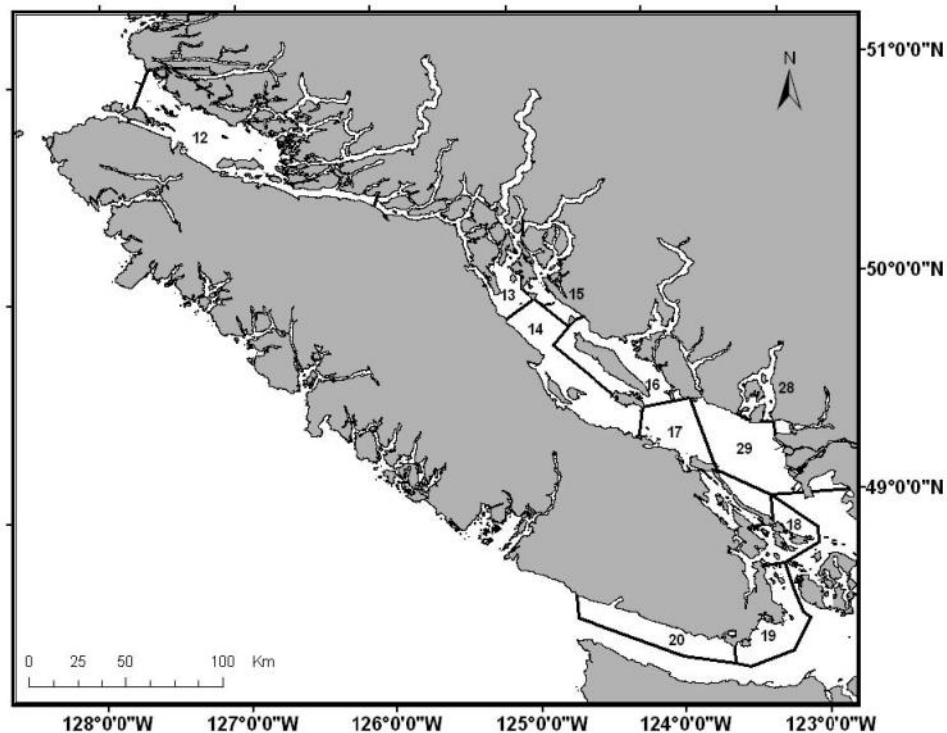


**Figure 25 Frequency (% total catch) for canary rockfish in recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper and north Puget Sound averaged across decades.**

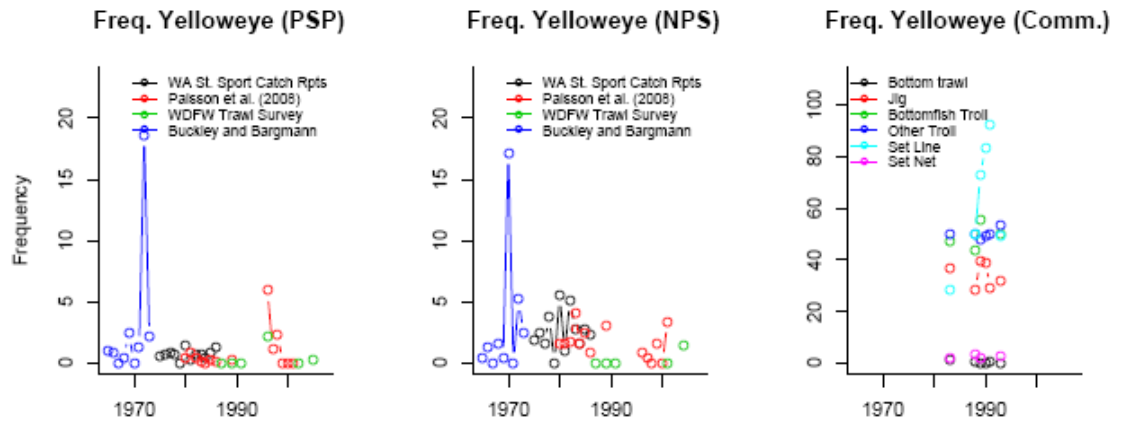


**Figure 26** Frequency estimates (% total catch) for canary rockfish in recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper (PSP) and north Puget Sound (NPS), and in commercial catch from north Puget Sound (Comm). It does not appear in commercial catch in PSP. The outlier point (1973 in NPS) for the Buckley and Bargmann data is at 52%.





**Figure 27** Statistical reporting areas divided into nos. 12-20 and 28-29, as used by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (From COSEWIC (2002)).



**Figure 28** Frequency estimates (% total catch) for yelloweye rockfish in recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper (PSP), north Puget Sound (NPS), and commercial catch from NPS. They do not appear in commercial catch in PSP.

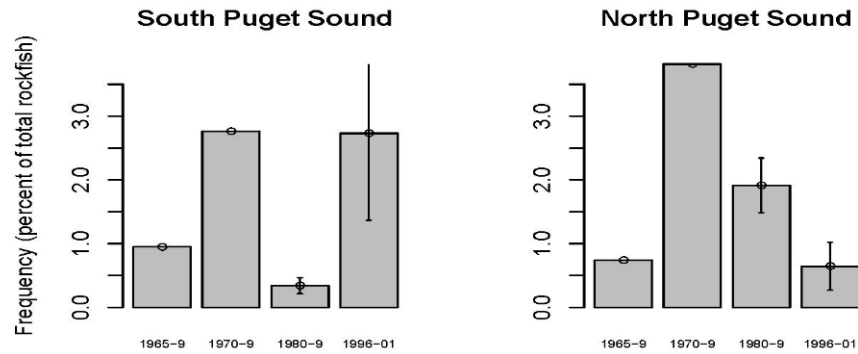
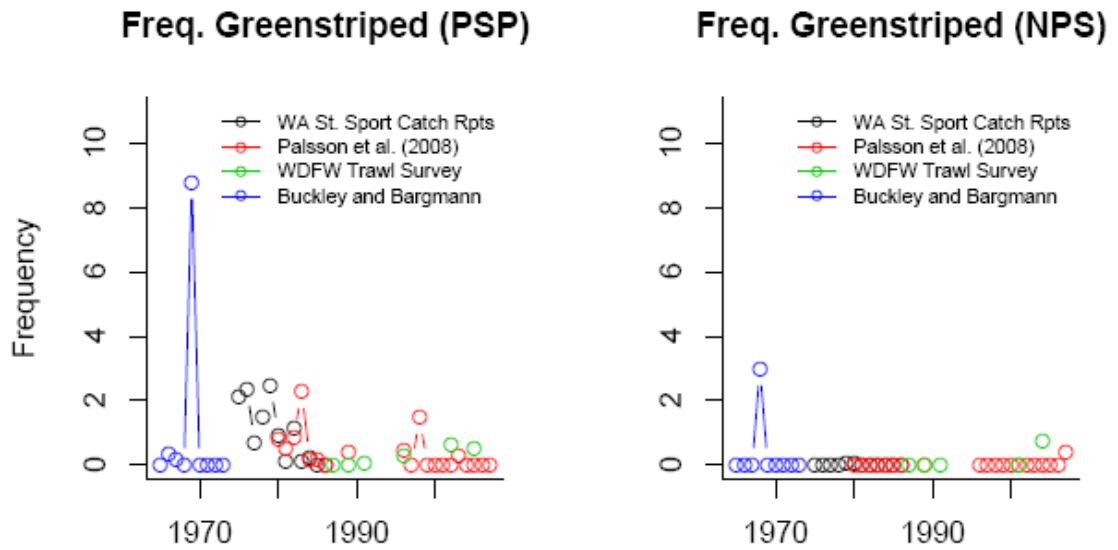


Figure 10: Frequency (percent of total catch) for Yelloweye rockfish in the recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper and north Puget Sound averaged across decades. For 1965-69 and 1970-79, we do not have sample sizes (numbers of rockfish identified) and thus confidence intervals cannot be presented. For these years, the numbers are simply the average of the reported fraction each year. For 1980-2001, sample sizes are provided in Palsson et al. (2008). The average frequency is calculated as

**Figure 29 Frequency (% total catch) for yelloweye rockfish in the recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper and north Puget Sound averaged across decades.**



**Figure 30** Frequency estimates (% total catch) for greenstriped rockfish in the recreational catch. They are not recorded in the commercial catch.

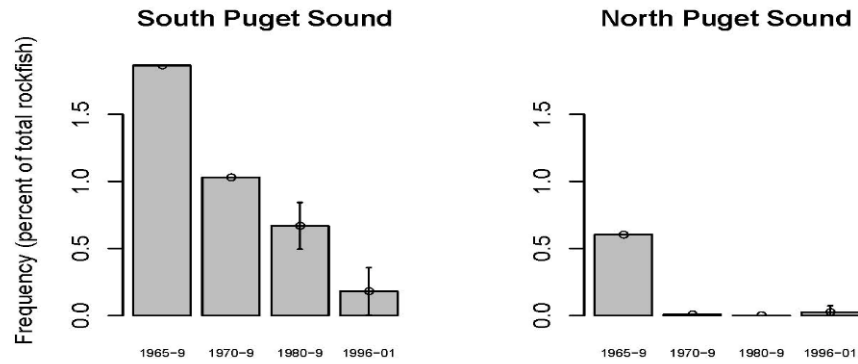


Figure 12: Frequency (percent of total catch) for Greenstriped rockfish in the recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper and north Puget Sound averaged across decades. For 1965-69 and 1970-79, we do not have sample sizes (numbers of rockfish identified) and thus confidence intervals cannot be presented. For these years, the numbers are simply the average of the reported fraction each year. For 1980-2001, sample sizes are provided in Palsson et al. (2008). The average frequency is calculated

**Figure 31 Frequency (% total catch) for greenstriped rockfish in the recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper and north Puget Sound averaged across decades.**

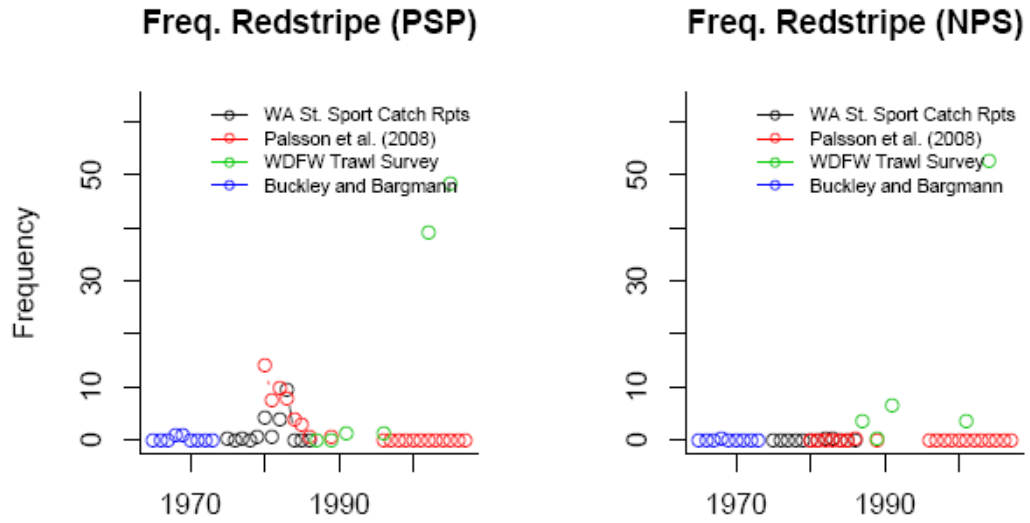


Figure 32 Frequency estimate (% of catch) for redstripe rockfish.

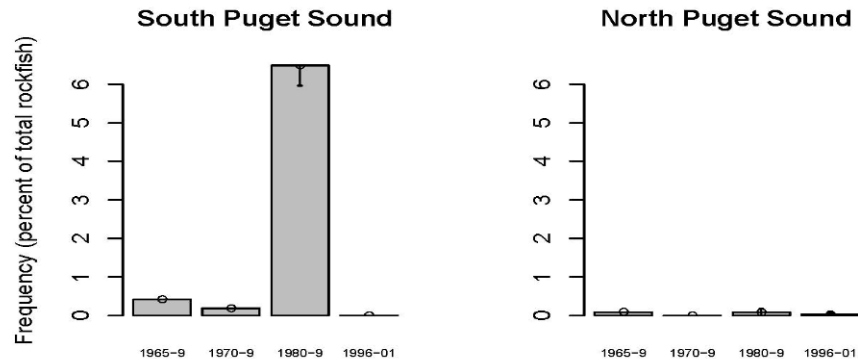


Figure 14: Frequency (percent of total catch) for Redstripe rockfish in the recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper and north Puget Sound averaged across decades. For 1965-69 and 1970-79, we do not have sample sizes (numbers of rockfish identified) and thus confidence intervals cannot be presented. For these years, the numbers are simply the average of the reported fraction each year. For 1980-2001, sample sizes are provided in Palsson et al. (2008). The average frequency is calculated as

**Figure 33 Frequency (% total catch) for redstripe rockfish in the recreational catch in Puget Sound Proper and north Puget Sound averaged across decades.**

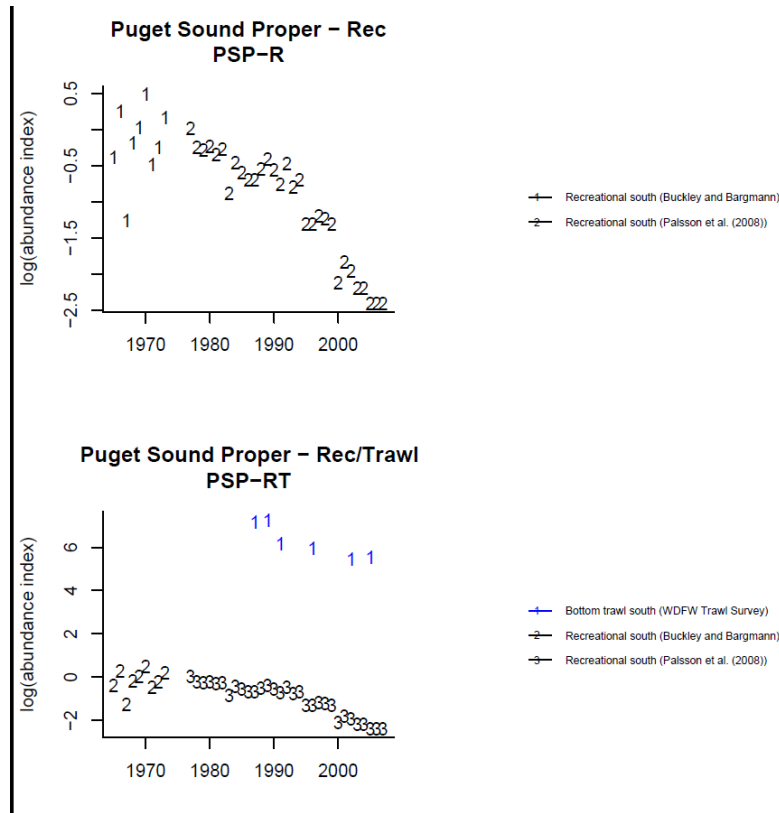


Figure 34 Data used for two Puget Sound Proper analyses. The different colors show which data were treated as separate (but not independent) population processes. Data from the trawl survey may be sampling a different segment of the total rockfish assemblage (age or size). Each process has the same long-term population growth rate (a parameter) because over the long-term one segment of a population cannot have a different trend than another segment. But over the short-term, different population segments can certainly have different trajectories. Modeling the trawl data as its own process allows that this segment of the population could have different process variance and a different trajectory than the recreational data – but the a parameter is forced to be shared.



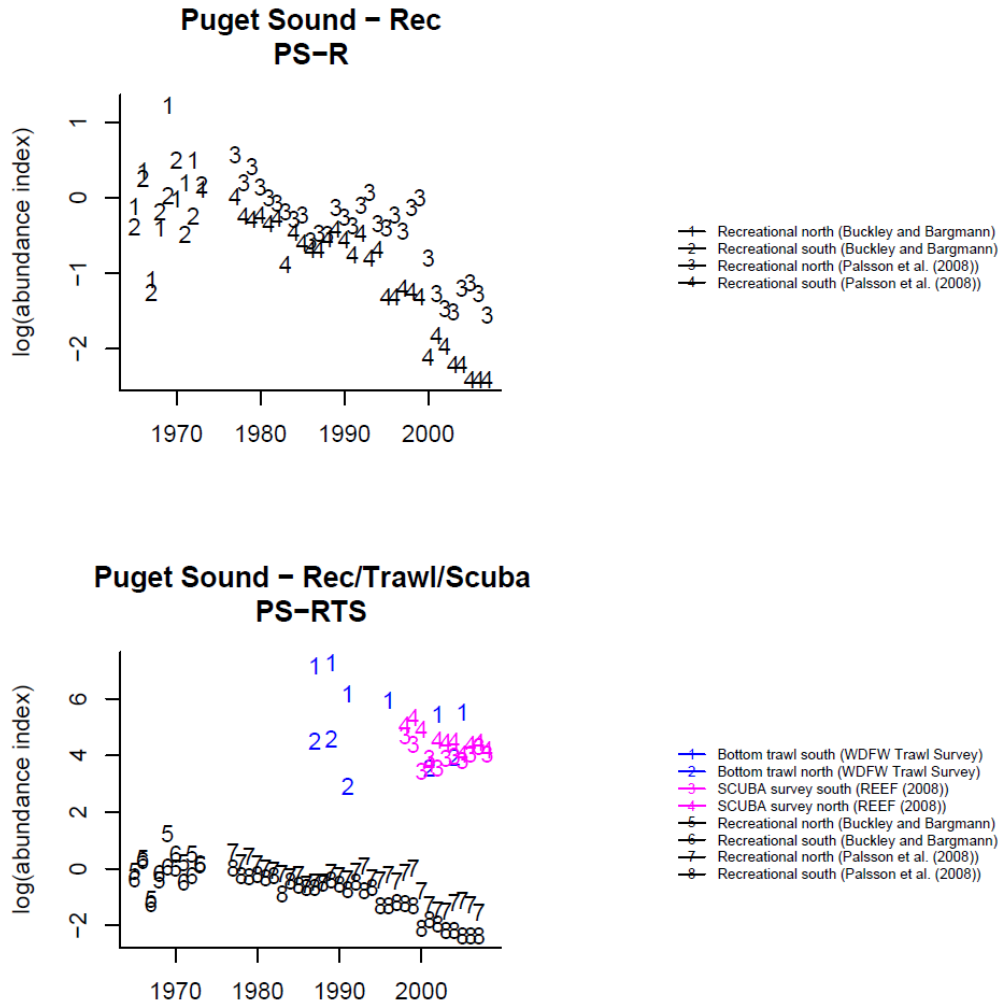


Figure 35 Data used for two Puget Sound (north plus south) analyses. Different colors show which data were treated as separate (but not independent) population processes. See comments on previous figure.

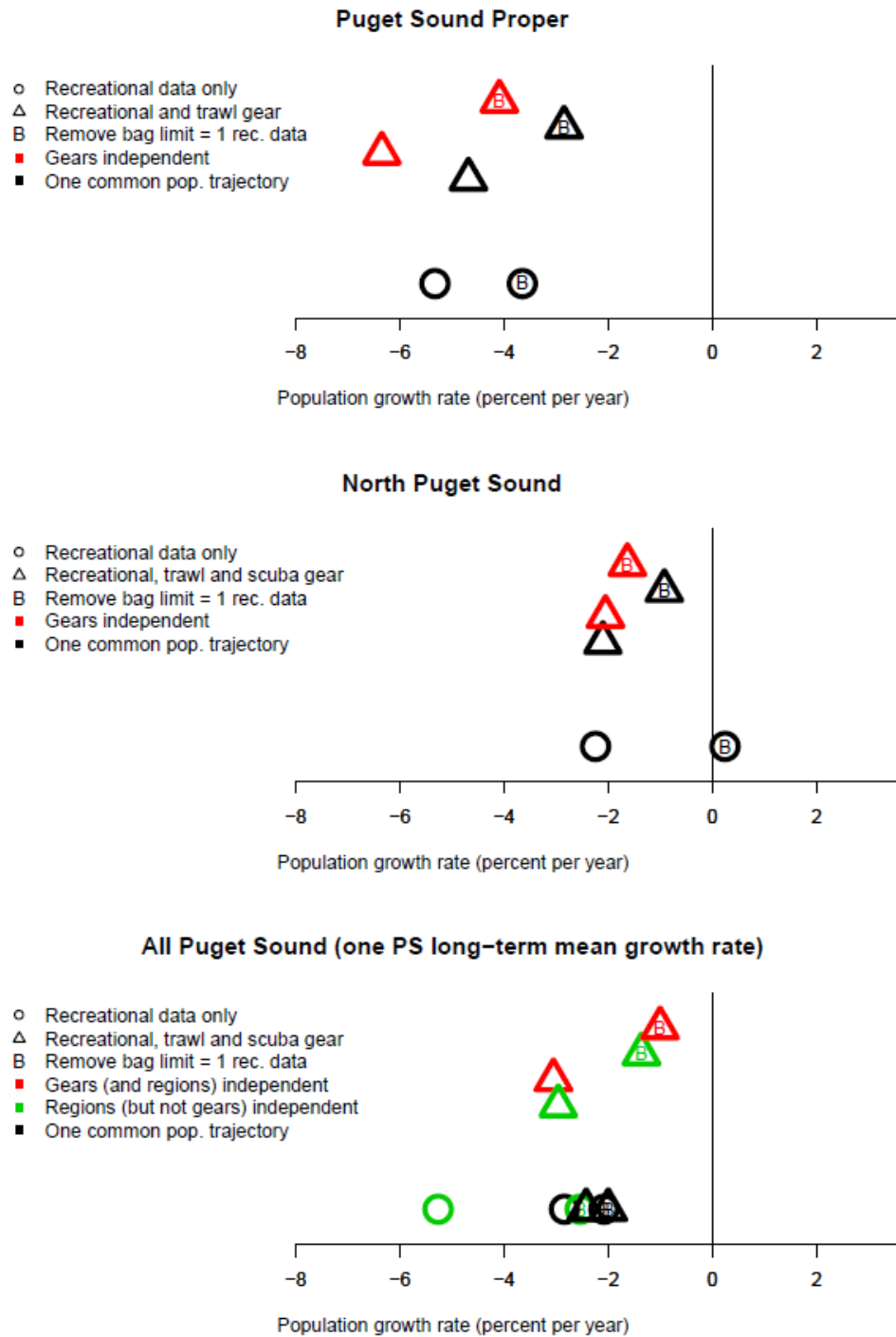
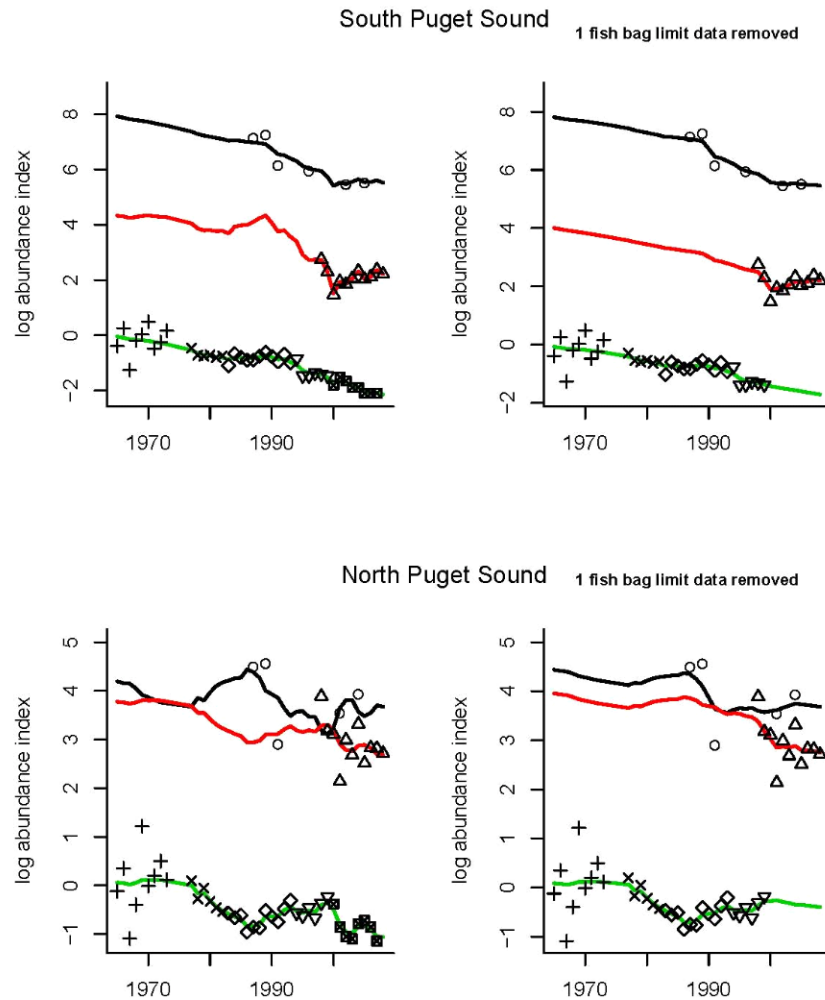


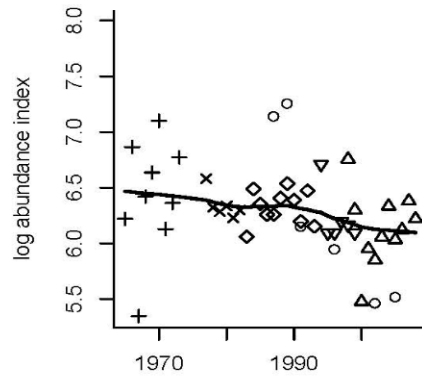
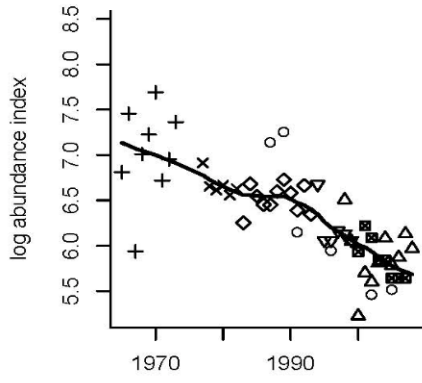
Figure 50 Estimates of rate of population growth (or decline if negative) for 1965-2007 using recreational, trawl and REEF survey data. Colors and symbols denote different model assumptions. The height on the y-axis expresses the subjective assessment of the support for the assumptions behind each model. See text for a discussion of the assumptions and which are supported by the data.



**Figure 37** The model estimates for 'total rockfish' trajectories measured by each data source for the analysis where different data sources are allowed to be measuring independent realizations of the population process. Mathematically, each gear  $i$  is modeled as  $\log(X_{t,i}) = a + \log(X_{t-1,i}) + e_{t,i}$ ;  $\log(Y_{t,i}) = \log(X_{t,i}) + g_{t,i}$  trajectory, where  $a$  is the shared mean population growth term (same across data sources),  $e_{t,i}$  are the independent process error terms which are drawn from a normal with mean 0 and variance  $\sigma_i$ , and  $g_{t,i}$  are the observations errors data source  $i$ . The goal of the analysis is to find the shared  $a$  that is most consistent with all the data. The analyses with and without the 1 fish bag limit data are shown.

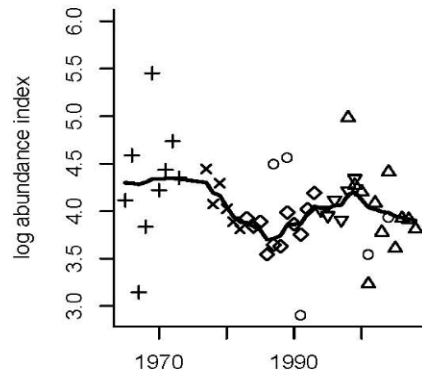
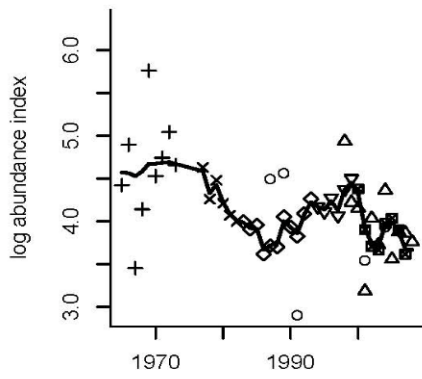
South Puget Sound

1 fish bag limit data removed

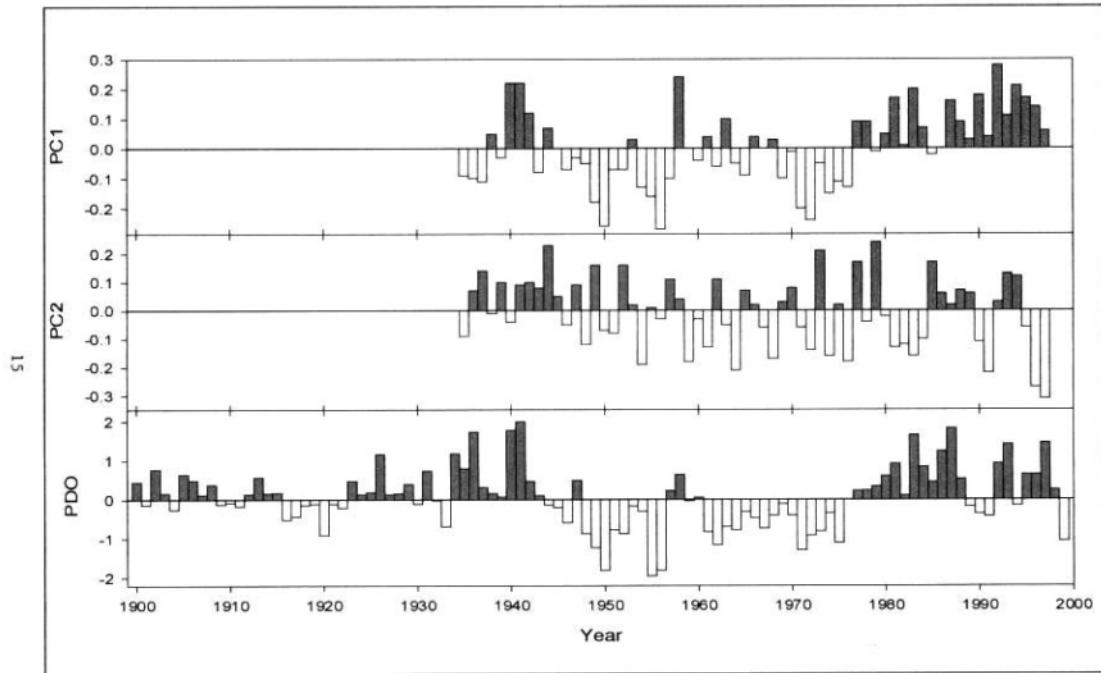


North Puget Sound

1 fish bag limit data removed



**Figure 38** The model estimates for 'total rockfish' trajectories measured by each data source for the analysis where different data sources are forced to be measuring the same population process. Each gear  $i$  is modeled as  $\log(X_{t,i}) = a + \log(X_{t-1,i}) + e_{t,i}$ ;  $\log(Y_{t,i}) = \log(X_{t,i}) + g_{t,i}$  trajectory, where  $a$  is the shared mean population growth term (same across data sources),  $e_{t,i}$  are the independent process error terms which are drawn from a normal with mean 0 and variance  $\sigma_i$ , and  $g_{t,i}$  are the observations errors data source  $i$ . The goal of the analysis is to find the population trajectory that is most consistent with all the data. The analyses with and without the 1 fish bag limit data are shown.



**Figure 39** First (PC1) and second (PC2) principal components analysis of climate variables for Puget Sound (Pinnix 1999) along with the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) (Mantua 1997). PC1 captures decadal scale variability; resembles the PDO. PC2 captures interannual scale variability.